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May 1996

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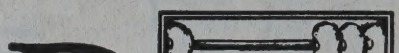

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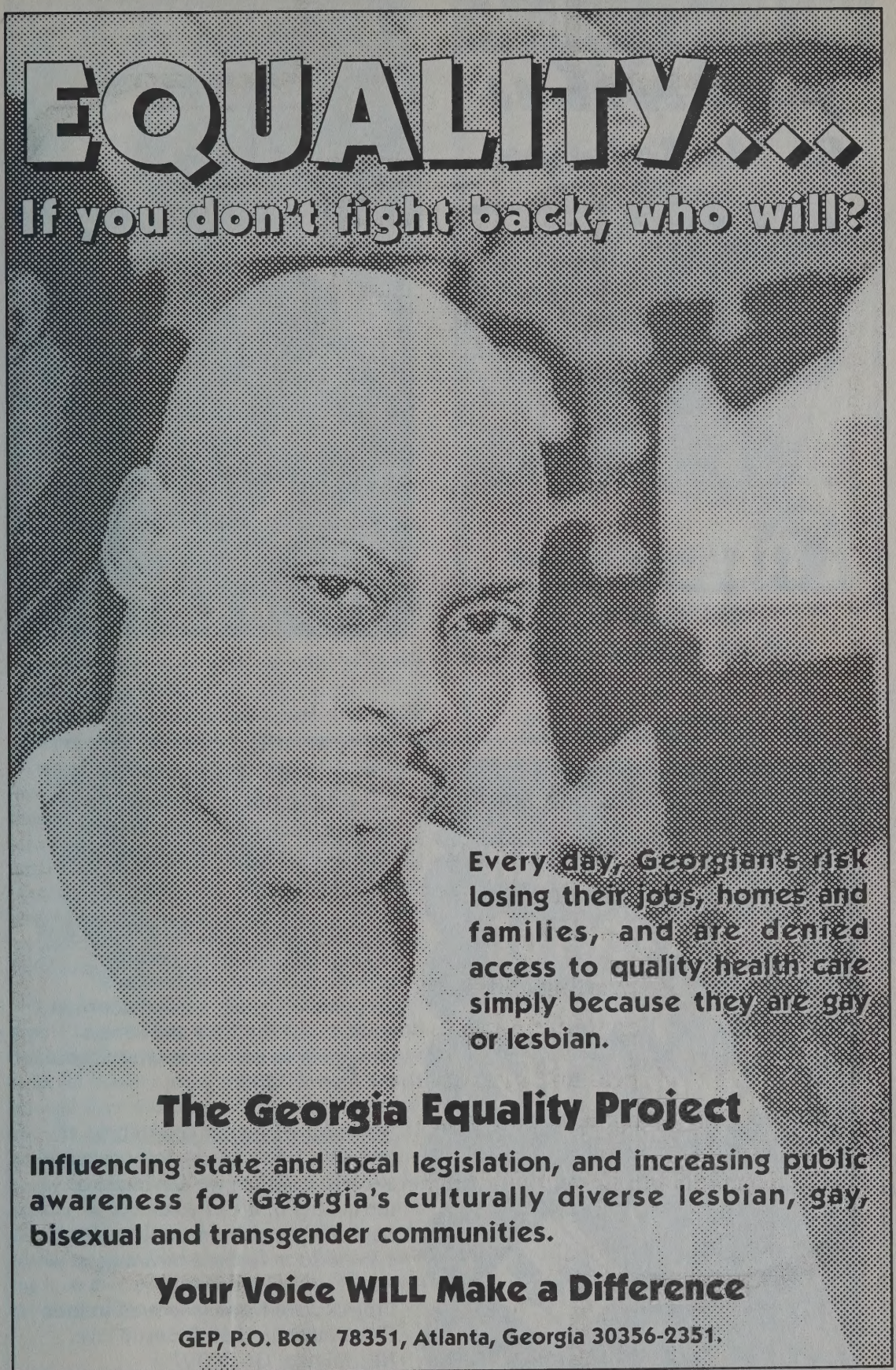
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From The Editor

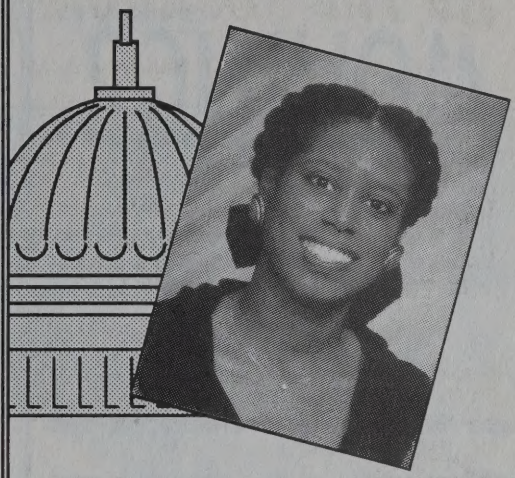
Mother's Day is always a very special time for me. It's another wonderful opportunity to let my mom know how much I appreciate her sacrifices as she raised my sister and I. Like most African-American parents, she encouraged us to 'get a good education,' 'get a good job' and 'find a good man.' (Oh well, two out of three ain't bad!)

My mom, Harriet Annie Cothran McLaughlin Thompson, widowed three times, is now enjoying her retirement in Palm Coast, Florida. As a manager for Mcgraw-Hill book publishing company, she also moonlighted as a caterer to make ends meet. Mom is so awesome in the kitchen that at the age of 24 she catered her own wedding for over 300 guests. The event is still talked about to this day! Weddings, bar-mitzva's, retirement dinners, you name it, girlfriend could, would and still can spread the table!

Every extra dime she made was spent on us. Her catering business paid for my tuition at one of New Jersey's most prestigious (translate expensive) private academies, The Peddie School. Her king sized pound cakes and mile-high lemon meringue pies paid for my four years at Georgia Tech and my sister's years of training as a travel consultant. Most everyday at our house was like a holiday and the holidays seemed larger than life. Our home was filled with love and affection as mom often sang glorious hymns while she prepped her amazing dishes or as a way to entertain my sister and I while we peeled what seemed like 1,000 pounds of potatoes for one of her parties.

I am most grateful for my mother's unconditional love. I know it's not easy for her to think of her daughter, whom she groomed for career and marriage, as an out lesbian activist who has the nerve to publish and share this news with the world. Although she slips into denial at times, ("I'm still praying for you a good man"), she's always sweet and welcoming to my friends, (many of whom drive down for her cooking without me!). As I shop for Mother's Day this year, I think of my mom's life; she has wonderful friends, good health and two grown daughters making it on their own. I stop and wonder 'What can I get for the woman who has everything?!'

THANK YOU!



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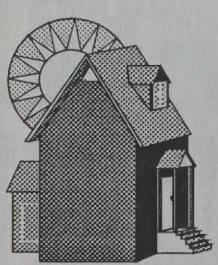

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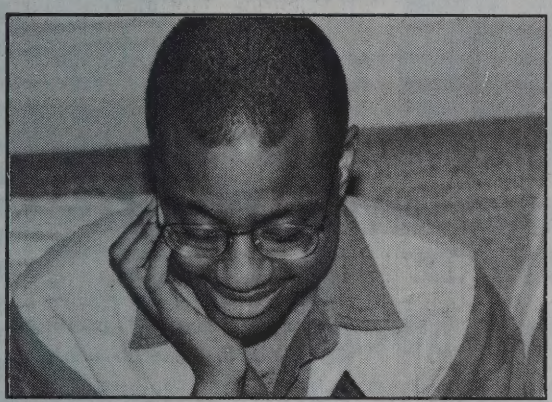
Contents

MAY 1996

Happy Mother's Day!

Black Lesbians with Children Share their Joy!

page 9



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No Competition!

James Earl Hardy the Second Time Around!

page 19

PLUS

Who's Who: ..... Page 37
Movin' and Shakin' Black Gay Pride Coast to Coast

A Charge to Keep ..... Page 26
Scholars Challenge the Black Church

Create Your Own Reality ..... Page 29

How to Choose a Therapist ..... Page 13

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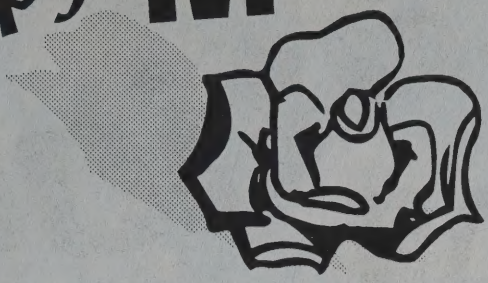

Black Lesbians With Children Celebrate

When Elishia and her partner decided to transfer their family from California to Atlanta, the children were not the only thing they brought along. They also transferred an organization for black lesbians who are also mothers.

The purpose of the group is to promote social interaction and support between African American lesbians and their children. They meet the second Saturday of every month. Some of their earlier activities include camping, a trip to Scitrek, picnics, potluck dinners and game parties.

In addition to the support aspect of the group, the women also plan social activities that are for "mom's only," such as dancing, and trips to the theatre and movies. These progressive matrons even hosted a pajama party that was for the adults only, (and according to all they had a fabulous time!).

The organization also set up a babysitting co-op which helps share in the challenges of childcare. Each parent takes a turn caring for each other's children for the weekend. This allows for the children to develop close friendships with each other. Lia's daughter Brittanie, age 16, feels the same way and says "I like to come to the group because we play super fun games, go camping and hiking; it's like we bond."

Black Lesbians With Children (BLWC), meets the second Saturday of each month for picnics, potlucks, games, parties and more!

Several mothers shared their personal stories during an evening potluck:

Kathy—"I moved to Atlanta 2 years ago from Colorado and was introduced to several of the members through a friend. It was important to me to interact with women who were also out to their kids. For me it is very important to be honest with my son. I have visions of the group one day being developed on a national level."

Deborah—"The group has been very valuable to me because I was looking for some place that was more welcoming to my children. I saw an ad for the group and since then I've enjoyed the fellowship, friendship and support of the women in the group. I recently had to move and needed assistance, and the group was there to help me move. I've also been available to help other women when they needed it. I feel the group fulfills a need that is lacking in our community."

Pamela—"I came to the group with my partner who has a son. I support my partner in raising her child and also plan to be the birth mother of a child. The best thing about the group is that it gives children a chance to see alternative families enjoying themselves

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Mother's Day

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

and each other. My vision for the group is to see it grow and organize into a non-profit organization and to set up programs for all children."

BLWC welcomes and accepts women at all levels of "outness." "We realize that we express our lesbianism in different ways at different times in our lives," says one member mother.

Black Lesbians with Children is the only organization in the area that provides this type of support for African American lesbians.

The group welcomes all African American lesbians whether they are co-parenting, expecting, or considering parenthood.

Elisha, one of the organization's founders says, "I started the group because I felt it was important to get support for being a new mom. I wanted my kids to have a chance to interact with other kids and their moms. It's usually the one day I can count on for laughter and good fun. My wish for the group is to see it grow by gaining new members and encouraging a strong commitment from everyone involved."

The group meets once a month and it is important that members take an active role in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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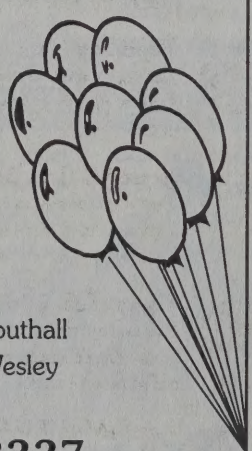

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Mother's Day

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

participating and being involved in all the activities. This enables consistency and continuity.

Monica—"I had been looking for a group where I could express my love for women and also involve my daughter. I found groups that were either for Black (straight) parents, Black lesbians or gay/lesbian parents but none that incorporated all of the above (Black, lesbian AND mothers). BLWC has provided a means for me to feel totally welcomed and embraced."

A perspective member shared her thoughts after several visits with her child:

"I feel the group is nurturing and not at all cliquish and I enjoyed the interaction with the children."

The most important factor to these women is how the children feel about attending and here's what the kids had to say:

Fitzgerald; age 5—"We get to go different places and it's fun."

Naeemah; age 12—"I really liked camping and we get to play fun games like "spoons." Sometimes we fight but we always make up; we really don't fight for real"

Athena; age 5—"I like playing jumping games. I feel good."

Brandon; age 13—"It's fun. I like everyone and it's really nice."

Dakota; age 5—"They talk. We play."

Adrian; age 14 —"We get to go places; having fun all the time."

Chelsea; age 5—"I like it because it's special and because I like my friends. I love to meet new friends."

BLWC is looking forward to a wonderful summer! They are currently in the process of planning fun and exciting activities such as whitewater rafting, picnics, Six Flags and adult evenings out.

New members are always welcome and trial visits are encouraged. Elisha Harris—404-378-4135 or Monica Ealey—404-212-8515 can be contacted for additional information. HAPPY MOTHERS DAY!!!

Starscopes

Happy Birthday Taurus (April 20-May 20)
This year focus on giving, long range goals highlighted. Capricorn, Pisces, and Sagittarius play major roles.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)
Bypass the junk food for veggies. Take your vitamins and do get some sleep. It'll do wonders for your digestion as well as nerves.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)
A friends encouragement gives you the added boost to come out of your shell and take a walk on the wild side.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)
No need to feel overlooked and unappreciated. The hard work you put in at the office will pay big dividends in the end.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Get in the mood for affection. A loved one needs to share. The attention will do you good.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Your ability to compromise is needed in a joint business venture. Communicate openly now, on how shared resources will be handled.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Allow those close to you the freedom to be themselves. Full moon on the third cautions, sensitivity is crucial when dealing with emotional issues.

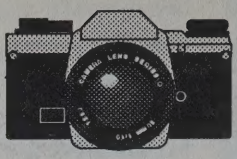
Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
You'll find that mysterious one is as intrigued about deciphering your many secrets as you are theirs.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)
Your hard won accomplishments don't go unnoticed. Time is ripe to approach those higher up for that well deserved raise.

Aquarius (Jan. 21-Feb. 19)
Your need for autonomy, family obligations, and career responsibilities must all come under one umbrella. A home improvement project is best left for a later date.

Pisces (Feb. 20-Mar 20)
You receive news in the mail concerning a close relations. Don't let sentimentality stand in the way of good old fashion reason.

Aries (Mar. 21-April 19)
An important deal you've been negotiating is likely to be fraught with delays. Time to weigh your options carefully, and practice patience.



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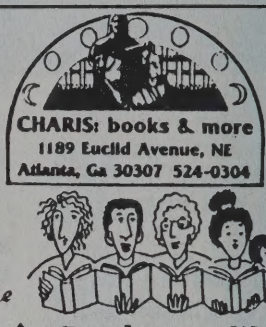

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HOW TO CHOOSE... a Therapist

by Carla Anderson, MA

Many have often come across mental health "professionals" who did more harm than good. In fact, some experiences have involved unethical practices. Many of us are just beginning the journey to ourselves. If we are detoured from the correct path, some of us never complete it, therefore, it is important to seriously consider who we choose as a healer.

One of our first cues would be our comfort level with the therapist. Always remember, you are purchasing a service. To put it another way, if you let someone do your hair and you are dissatisfied with the outcome, would you return? Probably, not. If dissatisfied, we should ask for referrals from those we trust or a counseling referral agency not connected with any institution or facility. Feel free to inquire about fees, locations and why that provider is recommended.

Fees are a very important issue to explore. For many, this determines whether we will begin to heal ourselves or not. Many of us are in constricted financial situations and initially paying a fee that soon becomes not affordable is stressful in itself. Do not hesitate to approach your therapist either initially or later about payment arrangements or a sliding scale fee. Also, if during therapy you find yourself in a financial crisis, speak to your therapist about a temporary reduction in a fee or balance payment arrangements.

So there you are, in the presence of a healer you feel initially at ease with and is affordable. Now what? Should you continue to keep in touch with the course of treatment and how you feel in it? Definitely! This is often the point when potentially harmful, unethical and unsafe behaviors may emerge.

Your therapist's office is the place for the healing process, (unless you are potentially harmful to yourself or others). Neutral locations can be utilized as well, such as a coffee shop or a restaurant, etc. It is, however, questionable if a therapist invites themselves to your home or place of business. Keep in mind, this is different from unexpectedly appearing at your job to obtain the services of your company or employer.

Questionable behavior by a therapist may include examples of the following:

1. Your therapist has gone with you for a casual lunch or dinner more than twice while you were in treatment. (It is not a professional practice to 'socialize' with a client.)
2. You cancel an upcoming appointment and your therapist invites themselves to your home to 'check on you.' (If you are not a client in crisis, the appropriate behavior would be to call the client to reschedule the appointment.)
3. You run into your therapist in public and the therapist

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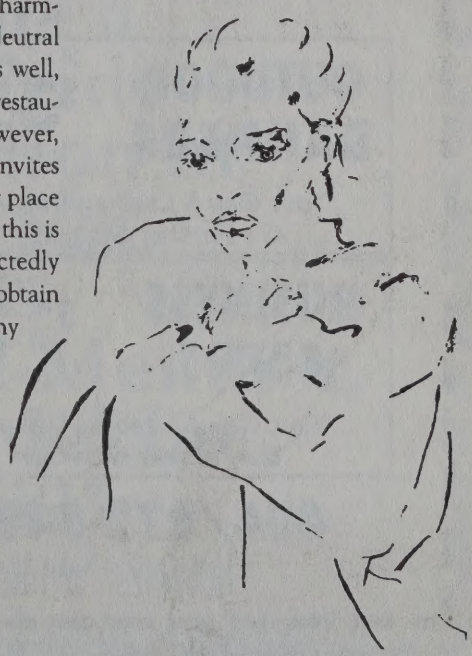

introduces you as 'a client.' (This compromises not only the client's confidentiality but also sets up potentially harmful dual relationships.)

Confidentiality is a very intricate part of the therapeutic process. Most of us would not feel safe or comfortable if you are unsure that what you discuss and process with your therapist will remain in the office or only be discussed with the therapist's supervisor.

The issue of dual relationships is very important to the issue of trust. It is difficult to continue to progress through the therapeutic process if you also do your therapist's hair or otherwise regularly give your therapist your direct services. It is best and helpful if the therapist remains as an objective, unmeshed figure in your life. Anything else compromises your relationship with your healer.

One final issue to be aware of is the level of physical contact with your healer. If a more homeopathic approach to healing is chosen, then touching is part of the process, for example acupuncture, massage therapy, chiropractic care or yoga instruction. For a clinician in the mental health field, touch is not part of the therapeutic process. A hug, handshake or pat on the back in greeting or departure is fine only if you are comfortable about it. However, a pat on the knee, caressing touches or tight constricting full body hugs are not therapeutic. The therapist can utilize other means to offer comfort during the session (i.e., tissue, a large pillow, stuffed animals or manipulative objects such as rocks, crystals or shells). If at any time you feel uncomfortable with physical contact, do not dismiss it. Especially if you are a survivor of abuse. This could totally block your healing. It is not something you have to tolerate.

Hopefully you are equipped with a general checklist of what to expect and explore with you potential healer. This is to accompany the other inquires we usually makes such as degree, experience, background with your particular issues, scheduling times and location. Remember, you are paying for a service and you have a choice. More harm than good could develop if you find yourselves feeling trapped with a provider. Ask questions, get referrals and recommendations and listen to your gut reaction. Otherwise you could use the negative experience as an excuse, as many do, to stay in a routine cloak of denial.

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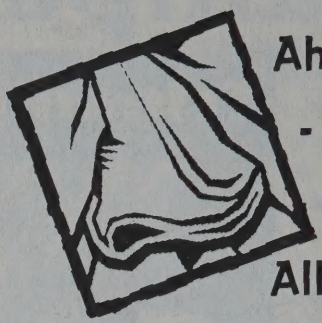

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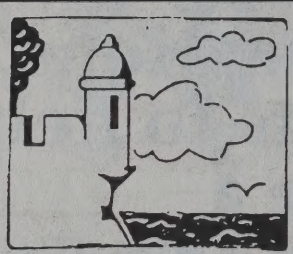

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PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name:. . . . . Vicki Harris

Age: 35

Status: . . . . . Single Parent

Career: . . . . . Special Events Coordinator/Instructor

Hometown . . Chicago, Illinois

Last Book: . . "B-Boy Blues" by James Earl Hardy

Vicki enjoys going to movies, cooking and spending quality time with special friends. Her current project, creating and promoting an exotic calendar, has her excited and enthusiastic about expanding her clientele. The flyers for her weekly event,WET were so HOT that Vicki was prompted to create a new calendar entitled, "Safe and Wet." The '97 calendar will be available during Black Gay Pride day in Washington, D.C.

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No Competition!

James Earl Hardy Speaks

Who ever thought of asking me to be on this panel must have been reading my mind. Since *B-Boy Blues* was published in late '94, I've heard the word "competition" come out of the mouths of many—and the name E. Lynn Harris has always followed.

Naturally, E. Lynn and I are in competition because we're both Black and gay, and men who are Black and gay may be our target audience. But we each highlight particular aspects of the African-American gay experience, which is still grossly under-represented in literature. Instead of creating characters that are the Blackground in a white gay man's world, (which has been the norm), we capture the sensibilities and ideals of same gender loving men of African descent who exist outside the lesbian and gay (read: white) community.

And, in exploring this diversity, we have received, and will continue to receive, a diversity of reactions from that so-called target audience. Contrary to what some think, not every single Black gay or bisexual man is going to like what one or either of us creates. This explains why E. Lynn and I have gotten "negative" (or should we say vicious?) reviews from so-called Black gay critics; why we've received letters from brothers who embrace him but rebuke me and vice versa (the common complaints being that I'm "too Black" and he's "not gay enough"); and why I always cringe when folks compare our styles and announce I am better than him, expecting me to nod my head in agreement (uh-huh, just trying to start some mess.)

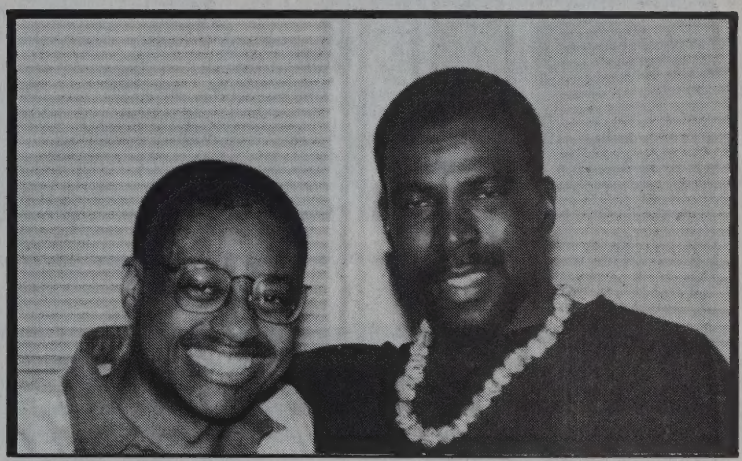


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Author James Earl Hardy (left) and Mark Johnson (right) of GLAAD in Washington, D.C.

So, no folks, we are not in competition—at least not the way people think. If we're really competing for anything, it's R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

For example: while shopping around the sequel to B-BOY BLUES,the standard rejection line was: "Your work is too similar to (you know who)"—and, believe it or not, you know who's publisher was one of them. This would be funny if it weren't so insulting. First, anyone who has actually read our work and not just our faces would know that Raymond Tyler and Mitchell Crawford live in different worlds: they are not in the same space (mentally, culturally, sexually, or spiritually), nor do they occupy the same place (socially or politically). Secondly, even if their life stations and life stories were similar, so what? Could one possibly be saying that there is room for only one pomo Afro homo in the literary universe at a time? The success of our books show that there is an audience out there

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

No Competition

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

hungry for our stories— and that folks who aren't black and/or gay will go along for the ride. But instead of acknowledging and appreciating our contributions,

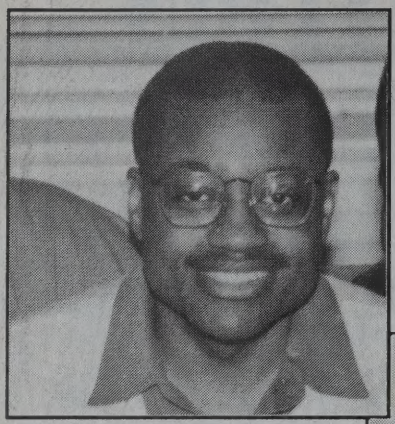
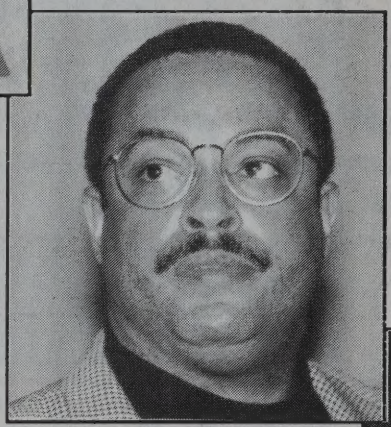


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

James Earl Hardy, author of B-Boy Blues *and sequel* The Second Time Around.

we're boxed into the "Black gay author" category and are expected to accept "novelty" status. But, despite what Advocate Men fetishizes, Black men are not "back" because we never went anywhere, nor are Black artist "in" because Time Magazine declares this on their cover.

This "flavor of the moment" syndrome bestowed upon E. and I means the work of other African and Caribbean same gender loving men go unnoticed or ignored, such as John R. Keene, whose breezy, brilliant semi-autobiographical novel, Annotations, I wish I had written; and Thomas Wright, a poet with promise from Philly, whose first collection is aptly titled Human Emotions. I mention them because I understand that, in an industry that will easily award a seven-figure contract, National Book Award, or a Pulitzer to someone white who writes about emotionally deficient, chronically unemployed, welfare collectin', criminal-minded, gun-totin', violence-prone, self-hating black people for the entertainment and bemusement of white folks, it is important for me to remember who my rivals aren't. Black authors are constantly told, through word and deed, that we are not qualified to define and document what Black is and what Black ain't. As a result, there isn't an extensive canon of contemporary work of gay/bi brothers to choose from. So every title that makes it to a bookshelf that is by us, about us, and for us not only allows us to hold up a mirror to ourselves,

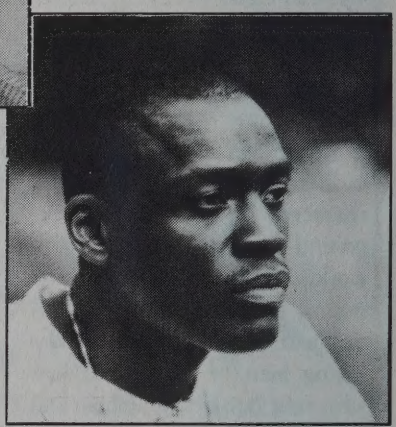


E. Lynn Harris, author of And This Too Shall Pass.

but is a testament to our existence for generations to come. It helps break that deafening code of silence, that wall of invisibility, following the legacies of Baldwin, Nugent, Cullen, Hughes, Thurman, and Dalaney, and finishing the unfinished business of Corbin, Saint, Dixon, Hemphill, and Beam, aligning, avenging, affirming, and arriving with the intent to stay.

So, like the elders advise, "Each one, pull on." When the door has been opened, even if it's just a crack, bring someone along with you. E. Lynn gave me a jacket blurb for *B-Boy Blues*. I agreed to contribute to a Black gay anthology even though I never wrote short fiction before. We don't have the luxury to participate in "divide-and-conquer, tit-for-tat, my book deal-sales are bigger than yours" games, for our lives—our past, present and future—are at stake. We have to form a communion that will nurture and support the writer and the work, because the uniformed, shortsighted, racist, elitist, classist, homophobic publishing industry won't.

In essence, one person's success does not mean another has failed or isn't as good: it means that it will be a little bit easier—and I do mean a little bit—for those following who may look like and love like him to get an agent to take them on, have an editor take them and their work seriously, get a lucrative deal, and see that title become a best-seller (maybe even a movie). And it also means that "the Black gay literary renaissance" I have been hearing so much about the past year and a half may finally happen.



Darieck Scott, author of Traitor to the Race.

I know this. E. Lynn does, too. Now, if only we could get everyone else to.

James Earl Hardy, author of B-Boy Blues, *and its sequel,* "The Second Time Around," *which is scheduled for release late*

Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney (center) met with gay and lesbian community supporters during a Venus BBQ Fundraiser in Atlanta.

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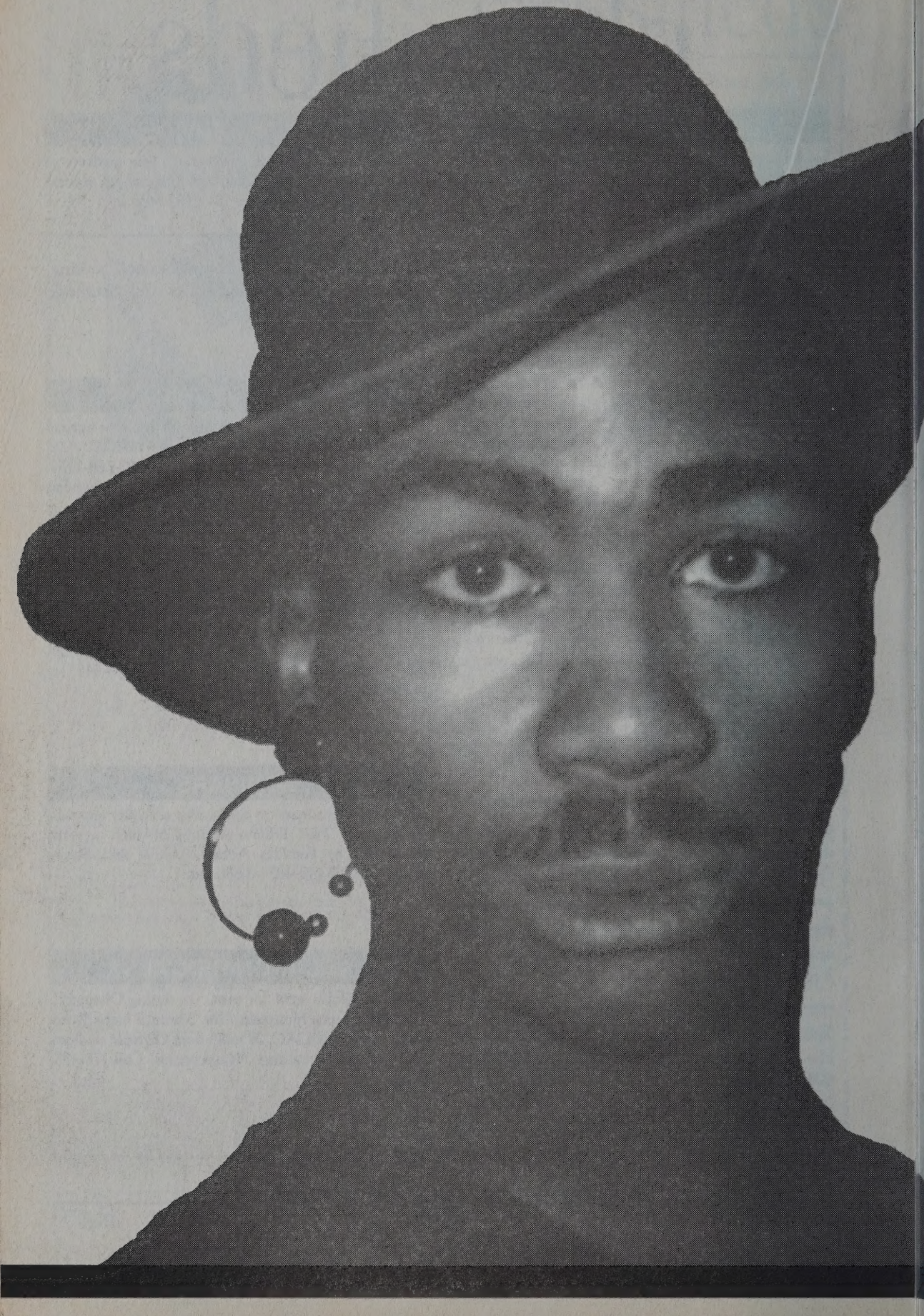


Performance Artist

R. Trey Johnson

July 21,1970–April 9,1996

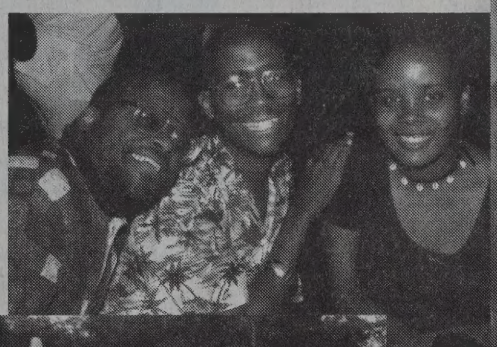
There are a number of ways to describe Tre Johnson. One could begin with his beautiful catlike eyes or his contagious smile or that delicious southern twist of his dialect. One could even begin by telling you about his great talents: his soul stirring singing, his frank honest writing on the black gay experience or his activist's roar.

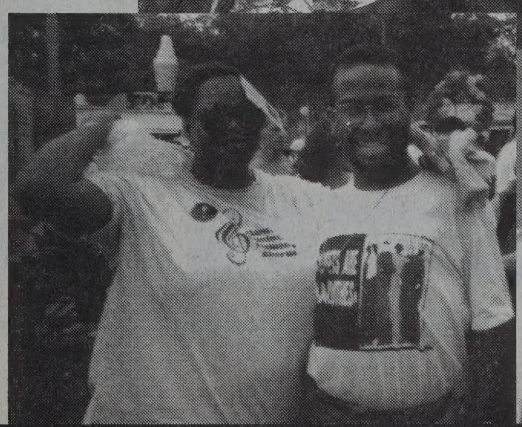
But it seems most appropriate to describe him as a gentle hero.

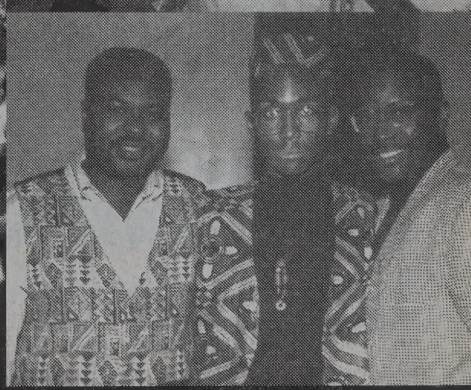
Tre was raised in Atlanta, Georgia, the youngest and only son of a blues singing father and devoutly pious Jehovah's Witness mother. He battled AIDS since 1990, when he was diagnosed at age 19. "AIDS came to look for heroes," Johnson said in a 1995 interview. Indeed, Tre Johnson was a hero having endured sickness and having worked hard to see that the plights of people living with AIDS as well as blacks gays and lesbians were heard. He was proud to have been a spokesperson for Outreach, Inc., an African-American AIDS organization in Atlanta.

Tre was a proud graduate of Northside School of the Arts where he excelled in dance and music. He was also a courageous writer and performing artist. His writings have appeared in such publications as "The Road Before Us/100 black gay poets" (Galliens Press, 1990) and "Bound by Diversity", (Sebastian Press, 1994). Johnson's poetry and prose have also appeared in "Amethyst", "Southern Voice," "The James White Review" and "Eyeball." Tre has appeared on local and national stages including the theatres of London, France and Brussels. Some of his last local appearances have been in productions of "Legends Past and Present," "Souls On Fire" and "Warren."

Certainly, this singer, writer, performer and activist has proven that gentleness does not equal weakness. We celebrate the life of R. Leigh Tre Johnson, a true hero.







A CHARGE TO KEEP!

Scholars Challenge the Black Church

Morehouse College opened the doors to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Chapel earlier this spring during Religious Emphasis Week '96. Theological scholars, Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones of Howard University Divinity School and Dr. Rosetta Ross, assistant professor of ethics, Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, were asked to respond to a table talk on: "What are the challenges to the church becoming open and affirming of homosexuality."

PHOTO BY KES

Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones of Howard University School of Divinity.

Dean of King Chapel, Dr. Lawrence Carter, opened with a welcome and warning to the packed auditorium. "In this racist society there is need for respect of personhood and we will accept only the highest level of respect for tonight's speakers." Dr. Walter E. Massey, president of Morehouse College was out of the country but did send a message. "I am concerned that we bring scholars to speak on issues affecting our common humanity... we are not distinguished on our campus for having persons who's views are not widely affirmed." Earlier dialogue (in 1991), involving a visit to the campus by Dr. Jones almost became violent. The former school president was asked to apologize but many leaders in the African-American gay and lesbian community thought the apology was weak and refused to accept it. Since that time there had been a ban on inviting controversial speakers to the campus.

Jones, author of In Search of Zion, African Creative Expressions of the Divine and Silent Tears opened his discussion reciting a stanza of the Black National Anthem. "Stoney the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod, felt in the days when hope unborn had died; Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet, Come to the place for which our fathers

sighed?" He asked African-American religious leaders to consider "how homophobia and erotophobia connect to the slave trade.... The black community has a problem with homophobia because the black community has a problem with sexuality period.... If we had not been so 'heavenly' colonized by europurists we would not be so damaged."

As a solution, Jones offers a 15 week program designed to reshape the way people of African descent view and interact with each other. Each week focuses on thought provoking discussion such as, week 3; How are isms and supremacies related? and What are the roots of our attitudes? week 9, Week 10; Do women read and interpret the bible differently than men? Rich differently than poor? Blacks differently than whites? The 15th and final week focuses on individual and group strategies and closes with a ceremony of healing.

Professor Rosetta Ross began her response by clearly defining the difference between being "open to" and "affirming of" which led to a further distinction between "openness to and affirmation of homosexuals" and "openness to and affirmation of homosexuality." In the former instance she points to the question to be about the position of the church toward persons, 'whosoever will, may come in.' In the later instance she addressed the question to be about "religious interpretation of moral meaning of a practice of intimacy."

Dr. Ross offers five challenges to the church:

- First to recognize its "ever-present push toward unanimity in general and hierarchy in particular." We accept denominational differences but when it comes to configuration of family, social or political life there is a thrust for "uniformity in what constitutes 'right' Christian practice and behavior."
- Secondly, she challenges biblical literalism siting that "if the Bible is taken literally, with regard to homosexuality, (and a number of other social and moral issues), what the canon presents to us is one primary form of relating to one another in sexual intimacy."
- Third, Ross challenges the church to examine it's concept of scriptural inerrancy, because it "prevents recognition of human fallibility in recording scripture."
- Fourth, she asked the church to abandon it's "historical desire to control, instead of witness to the world."
- Finally, Dr. Ross says that the social and religious 'demonizing' of homosexuality "generally contributes to the inability to critically analyze the meaning and value of this form of sexuality to the community/society."

In closing, Dr. Ross asked two questions. One was pragmatic; the other theological.

"Of what value is it to the Church to exclude any human resource when we are confronted with the work of combatting multiple forms of violence, large scale homelessness and hunger, various types of crippling and fatal disease, and an array of other maladies which threaten and take away persons' dignity, prosperity, and possibility?"

Theologically speaking, "what does it really mean when Christians say that we are all made in the image of God?"

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Deena M. Jones, Spiritualist

The idea of creating your own reality is increasingly becoming a part of daily conversation. Do you create your own reality? If so, how?

The idea of creating your own reality is not new for even in the bible it states "As a man thinketh in his heart so he is." In his book Think and Grow Rich Napoleon Hill explains that the one thing that all the millionaires he interviewed had in common was that they had control of their thoughts. Aristotle once said "What we expect, that we find."

Yes, it's true, you do create your own reality! However, before you conquer creating your reality you must know where your reality lies. In Preparing for this writing, I asked several people the question, "What is your reality?" Most of the people I approached with this question pointed to the outside world. The trees, the cars, the crime, the love; 'all that you see is your reality,' explained one woman. The majority of people believed they lived in the same reality with everyone else. However this is not quite accurate; we all have a separate reality. That which we see on the exterior is simply a collective manifestation or out-picturing of each person's individual reality, making what appears to be a whole reality.

So, where is your reality? Your reality lies within your mind, it is the sum of your thoughts, convictions and imagination. That which you physically see is the manifestation of your thoughts through desire and expectation. This is why Aristotle said "what we expect, that we find." There is no other rule!

How do you create your own reality? The first step is to learn how to take control of your thoughts. You can begin by noting your thoughts in five minute intervals. What are you thinking? Dr. Deepak Chopra revealed in his book 'Ageless Body Timeless Mind' that the majority of the thoughts people have today are the same thoughts they had yesterday. If you want to change your physical experiences, you must change your thoughts. Once you have noted your thoughts in five minute intervals, expand the time minute by minute, hour by hour until it encompasses your whole day. As you master this process and know what you are thinking, the second step is to center your thoughts to embrace only what you truly desire to be yours.

To begin the process of centering your thoughts, the thought must be examined.

If the thought is based on lack, such as I cannot, then you know the thought is not based on truth, for in God there are no limitations. Replace the limiting thought with a thought aligned with the unlimited nature of God, The third step is to expect what you think and desire to come into form. Many people fall short of their blessings by lacking expectation. Know that what you think and desire will without doubt come into form when it is backed by expectation. This is the Law and the Law never fails.

Having all that you desire on this Earth plane is not only possible, but it is your spiritual birthright. You need only to see it in thought and desire it to come forth!

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BRIGGS: I guess that's why they say…

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PROFILE OF A MAN

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Age: 23

Status: . . . . . Involved

Career: . . . . . Account Executive

Hometown: . Columbia, S.C.

Last Book: . . "And This too Shall Pass," E. Lynn Harris

As the new Sales Manager for Venus Magazine, I have enjoyed the opportunities to meet various business owners and establish business relationships with each of them. As a young African American, I feel that it is very important to sustain a positive role as well as tenacious leadership skills to help promote prosperity and peace for all, including African Americans, no matter what their walk of life.

★ D.H.S. ★
SELL-OUT CENTER
NEW SHIPMENT JUST ARRIVED
SLEEPER SOFA $85 & Up
CARPET 12' X 14' $55
MATTED FRAMED ARTWORK $40 & UP
LAMPS $10 & UP
NEW SHIPMENT JUST ARRIVED
and Soooooo much more!
NOW ONLY AT D.H.S.
• FURNITURE • CARPET • ART •
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S.E. ATLANTA
1374 MORELAND AVE.
Moreland Shopping Center
(Near Value Village)
622-1800
Open 7 Days Mon-Sat 10-6, Sun 12-6
10% Off
with this ad

Texas Drilling Leather Co.
Located on the Deck Level
Wed - Sun
9pm - 2am
ATLANTA'S PREMIER
LEATHER/LEVI BAR
HOURS: FRI 3 pm - 4 am • SAT-THURS 3 pm - 3 am
306 Ponce de Leon - Atlanta • 404 87-EAGLE
ATLANTA EAGLE
No Cover
Valet parking
Bank ATM available
AD Designed by Dale Calloway

This Is How We Do It . . .

Safely

Safe Sexy Proud

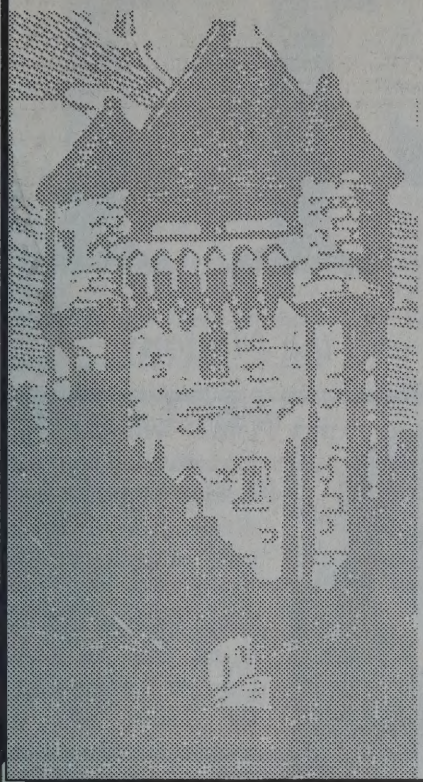
African American Gay Outreach

African-American Gay & Bisexual Men!!!

- **Come and meet other safer sex hunks!**
- **Learn how to eroticize your love life!**
- **What you need to know about safer sex!**

AID Atlanta

Sponsored by: The African-American Gay Outreach Program.
Call: 885-6800 extension 271
for more information and registration.
1430 W. Peachtree Street.



The Palace

(a.k.a. The Pearl Garden.)

Now Open Every Day at 5 PM!!
No Cover Monday–Wednesday

Monday: Coming Soon... Live Entertainment!

Tuesday: No cover!

Wednesday: The Hottest Sexy Underwear Contest in Town!

Thursday: A night for women of color!

Friday: The Best in Booty Shake, House, R&B, and Hip Hop!

Saturday: Let's do it again until 4 AM!

Sunday: Come enjoy the Best Social Hour In Town!

Kitchen Coming Soon!

15 Simpson Street • Downtown Atlanta

(404) 522-3000

HOW CAN I HELP Pride 96 ?

General Meeting

May 16

June 20

PM The Marriott-Northeast
Century Center
I-85 and Clairmont Road

ABOUT PRIDE 1996:
The PrideLine 770 662 4533 or ATLPRIDE@aol.com
or HTTP//:users.aol.com/atlpride

The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

National Black Arts Festival Seeks Volunteers

(Atlanta)-The National Black Arts Festival (NBAF) is seeking hundreds of volunteers to man various posts for the nation's largest exposition of black art. When the fifth biennial festival kicks off June 28–July 7, 1996, an audience of over 2-million attendees are anticipated. The 10-day presentation will showcase the work of over 1,500 artists in every conceivable discipline—music, theatre, film, literature, dance, performance art, visual art, and folk art.

Volunteers will serve in a vast array of exciting capacities, from escorting VIPs and celebrity guests, to air greeters, information providers and administrative support. Social and civic groups are encouraged to volunteer as teams. For an application and more information call (404) 730-0186.

Linda Villarosa (l), Executive Editor of Essence Magazine, and actress Jennifer Lewis were all smiles in Los Angeles after Lewis presented Villarosa with an award from the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center. Lewis, who is straight, played a lesbian judge in a recenly cancelled T.V. show.

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Don't Get Me Started!!!

Author, Joan Fountain catalyzes profound and lasting change. The corporate trainer/consultant and keynote speaker gave recent dynamic presentations at both Emory University and Georgia State University. Whether she is aiming to heighten disability or cultural awareness or training supervisors to effectively manage troubled employees her goal is to empower and equip participants to continuously monitor and assess their own and others' behavior, attitudes and values. Fountain has appeared as a guest on several nationally syndicated talk shows including Oprah Winfrey, Phil Donahue, Sally Jesse Rafael, Montel Williams and Faith Daniels. Her inspirational new book, DON't GET ME STARTED, will be released this fall. 1-800-454-5412

PHOTO BY HOPE HARRIS

Aren't You GLAAD?!

The Atlanta chapter of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) needs YOUR input and involvement. GLAAD is a very powerful organization nationally and has been very effective in its mission to "promote fair, accurate, and inclusive representation of individuals and events in all media as a means of combating homophobia and all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation or identity."

We want diversity on our team as well as in our ongoing decision-making process. There are plenty of opportunities to join us in responding to issues and concerns in our speakers pool and in our committees of monitoring and response, media contact, membership and diversity. Please call our hotline for more information about us.

We usually meet the first Tuesday of each month on the second floor of 828 West Peachtree in Atlanta—two blocks away from Loretta's Disco!!

Undo 2!!!

On the same day the U. S. Supreme Court announces its decision on Colorado Amendment 2, Georgia's gay and lesbian communities will react during a press

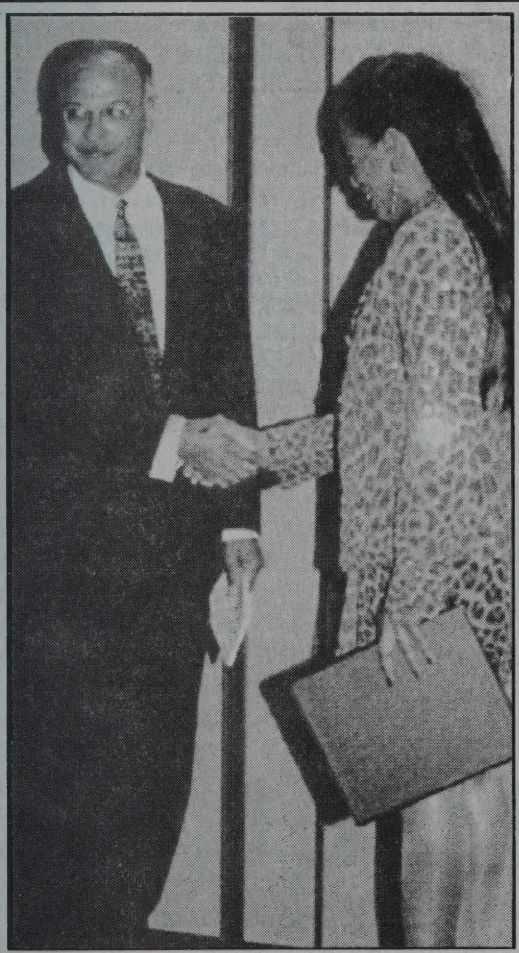
conference and rally. The Georgia Equality Project, Human Rights Campaign, Stonewall Bar Association, and ACLU of Georgia will all be represented. The entire community is expected to join this action. The press conference is scheduled for 3 pm and the rally at 6 pm ON THE DAY OF THE SUPREME COURT ANNOUNCEMENT, between "Outwrite Bookstore" and "Transfer" at Midtown Promenade, Monroe DR. (near Grady Stadium).

"Voices at the Table"

Nearly $1,000 was raised for Kitchen Table Press in Atlanta. The benefit was held as part of a national fundraising effort coordinated by the Union Institute of Washington D.C. Kitchen Table Press is the first and only U.S. publishing company owned and run by women of color. Co-founded by Barbara Smith and Audre Lorde, the Press has maintained an award-winning list of fifteen titles including "Homegirls: A Black Feminist Anthology" and "This Bridge called My Back." Feature at Emory University were local luminaries Beverly Guy-Sheftall of Spelman College, Activist and writer Ami Mattison, Latina Activist Aida Rentas and Amanda Gable of Georgia Tech. Panel members discussed the history of Kitchen Table Press and the impact of the press on their lives and work. All expressed the importance of a publishing company owned and run by women of color. The committee strongly encourages other Kitchen Table Press supporters - in Atlanta and elsewhere - to organize their own events. For more information please contact Jamie Grant at The Union Institute, 1710 Rhode Island Ave. NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20036-3007, Phone 202-496-1630, fx 202-496-1635.

We Will Not Go Back!!

The National Conference of Black Mayors, Inc. held Affirmative Action Rally '96 at the Georgia state capital last month. The movement to eliminate affirmative action would effect college campuses first, which accounts for the large turn out of black college students at the rally. The Morehouse glee club and the Atlanta Law Enforcement choir performed during the event. Former Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson also addressed the huge crowd, "as long as you keep bending over and taking it, they are going to continue to 'sock it to ya'!'... I have never seen African-Americans more asleep than we are today. We must wake up and say in the words of James Brown 'I don't want nobody to give me nothin'... just open up the door and I'll get it myself!"

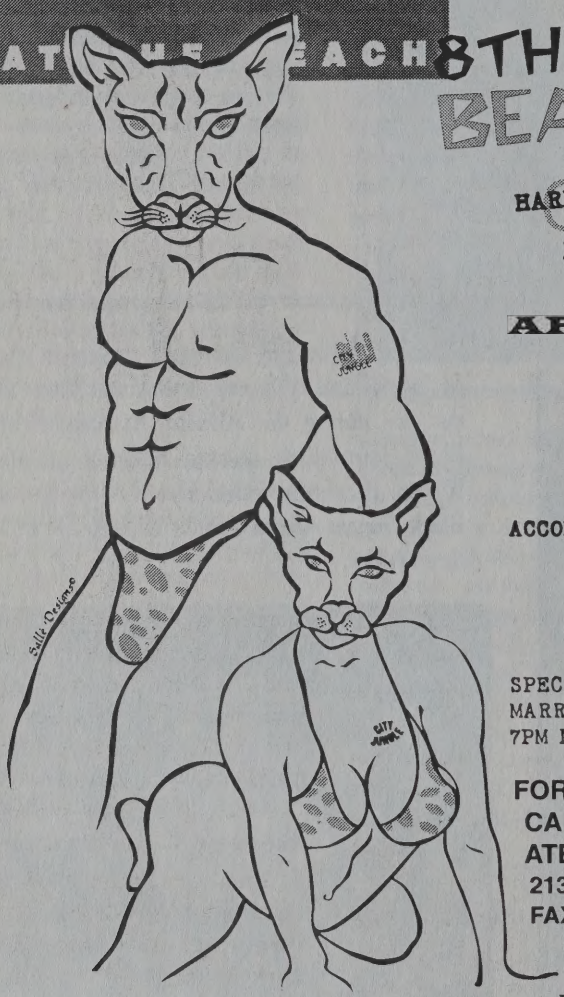


Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell welcomed the sizzling Rolanda Watts of the Rolanda Show to the city during the Atlanta Association of Black Journalist's awards banquet at the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel. This year's Black Pioneer Award went to WXIA-TV 11's Steen Miles.

PHOTO BY IAN IRVING

ATB

AT THE BEACH



JULY 6, 1996 - 7 AM
POINT DUME, MALIBU
$5

8TH ANNUAL BEACH PARTY

HARD BODY
SEXY SWIMSUIT
DIVA
CONTEST
BEST BEACH SET-UP

AFTERPARTY

LA AIRPORT MARRIOTT
5855 W CENTURY BLVD
CENTURY PAVILLION
10PM - 3:30AM
$15

ACCOMMODATIONS: LA AIRPORT MARRIOTT
5855 W CENTURY BLVD.
310-651-5700
ASK FOR ATB $77 RATE,

PARTIAL PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT LOCAL CHARITIES

SPECIAL RECEPTION JULY 5, 1996
MARRIOTT EXECUTIVE SUITES
7PM DONATION REQUESTED

FOR MORE INFO
CALL THE
ATB HOTLINE
213-969-1619
FAX 213-291-2888

VENDOR SPACE ALSO AVAILABLE

LOS ANGELES

Who's Who???!!

Movin' and Shakin'

BLACK GAY PRIDE

Coast to Coast

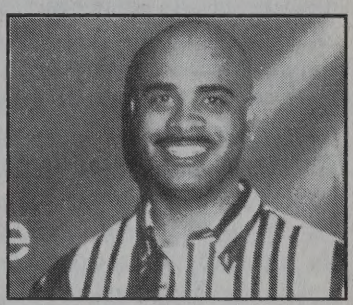
by Charlene Cothran

The men and women who make it happen for Black Gay Pride often work their behinds off all year so the rest of us can sashay into town with no worries, well rested and looking good. We are handed an itinerary of well planned events and exciting places to see. The most difficult decision we must make is which outfit to feature at which event, (and of course how to find a soul food establishment nearest to the host hotel). While we are kicking back, shopping or enjoying one of the many Pride festivities, scores of brothers and sisters, (already exhausted by the planning process), are STILL working to make certain that we have the time of our lives.

A tremendous volunteer effort is needed to pull off any event of this magnitude, (and we know how hard it is to find dedicated volunteers in our community,) yet several hard working leaders keep at it each year with a handful of loyal assistants. These movers and shakers aren't after glory or hype. They do what they do for the love of community.

Washington D.C.'s Black Lesbian Gay Pride Day sets the pace each Spring as the largest and strongest Black gay pride organization in the country. Joseph C. Brown is 1996 Coordinator. A Washington native, Brown moved up and down the east coast before leaving corporate America to start his own office/personnel management and administrative support service. Brown has done volunteer work for various organizations such as the "Why Say No" Sports Camp, the Inner-City Community AIDS Network of Greater Washington, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, HALT-Americans for Legal Reform, the American Lung Association of District of Columbia, and the Student Coalition Against Tobacco. "I plan for this year to be the best in the history of BLGPD and to be able to give back to the community, not only financially, but in a way that touches the heart and soul of each individual that supports us."

Carlene R. Cheatam is 1996 president of the BLGPD Executive Board. Born and raised in Jersey City, N.J., one of ten children, she attributes the inspiration of her loving parents to have "made me who I am today—serious, task oriented, hard working, visionary, active, caring, focused, emotional, and independent." Carlene has participated since 1978 in several presidential, mayoral and city council campaigns, and Operation P.U.S.H. She has been a member of the Sapphire Saphos, D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbian and Gay Men, Langston Hughes and Eleanor Roosevelt Democratic Club, Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, Black Women Together, Black Lesbian Support Group and Nubian Womyn.



D.C.'s Willey Broussard, Chair of Hospitality.

Numerous talented individuals make D.C.'s Pride the dynamic event that it is. Folks like **Reneé Parker**, volunteer coordinator; **Willey Broussard**, hospitality chair; **Wilmore Cook**, fundraiser; **Tracey Wildey**, pride booklet chair and administrator; and many others.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

Who's Who

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

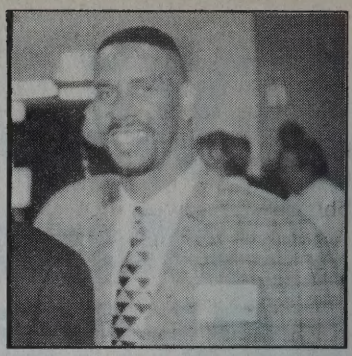
At mid summer, the next stop is California! AT THE BEACH is black gay pride Los Angeles style! The 3 day affair is definitely the largest gathering of gorgeous hunks and curves ever assembled on any shore. The 5th annual event will take place on beautiful Malibu Beach on the 4th of July Weekend. **Duane Bremond**, founder and Chief Financial Officer for At The Beach spent the last three years at AIDS Project Los Angeles in charge of community relations. He was responsible for building partnerships and creating coalitions. Prior to APLA Duane was a Congressional Aide to Congresswoman Maxine Waters where he was responsible for formulating strategies, management research, and oversaw the implementation and development of programs and services. Deborah Thurston, Vice-chair of At The Beach is a native of St. Louis, Missouri. Deborah is graduate of UCLA and works in the pharmaceutical industry managing an impressive territory in Southern California. In addition, Ms. Thurston owns and operates "Chameleon," a Los Angeles image consulting firm.

The At The Beach family circle was broken with the loss of Ronald Shorey. Ron was born on July 9,1960 in New York. He was

Ron Shorey made his transition this year. We miss you Ron!

generous, kind, helpful, courageous and a child of God. Ron served six years in the United States Marines as a communications specialist before settling in California. His profession as a communications engineer for Hilton Hotels and Resorts played an integral part in making ATB successful. (Thanks Ron, We miss you!!) All of the ATB members **Arnold Cannady, Wendell Carmichael, Will Harris, Johnnie Jackson, Keven Neal,** and **Habiba Shurat** devote much of their time to volunteer service for such organizations as the National Council of Negro Women, The Minority AIDS Project, The Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum/AIDS Prevention Team, and others. They face the challenge of bridging the gap when it comes to HIV/AIDS education, health care, self-esteem, and social and economic development. Members of ATB can be reached at P.O. Box 480439 Los Angeles, CA 90048, 213-291-2888 voice/fax or the ATB hotline 213-969-1619.

Detroit's first Black gay pride is "HOTTER THAN JULY!" Leaders in Detroit's Africa-American gay and lesbian community have planned the event for July 23-28 at various venues throughout the city. Popular social gatherings and charitable events such as the Billionaires Boys Club's (BBC) Anniversary Dinner Party/ Brunch and Men of Color's Picnic and Charity Body Auction have successfully brought folks from around the country to Detroit for over 5 years. **Kevin Griffin**, director of the organization, is a graduate of Michigan State University with a bachelor's degree in physics. He spent quite a bit of time educating others on the plight of South African under the now defunct apartheid regime. Kevin was also the chairperson for the aerobics for Aids research



Duane Bremond, Founder and Chief Financial Officer for At The Beach.

benefit called The Workout for Hope in 1994 and 1995. His participation in the gay and lesbian community began with his first visit to a meeting of the Men of Color Motivational Group, Detroit (MOC). "My initial intention was to get to meet new people." It was at that MOC dinner/get-together that a discussion about the state of the African-American gay and lesbian community led to the planning of Detroit Black Gay Pride.

Detroit Diva, **June Washington** is always on the move. She is co-founder of The Ladies of a Current Affair, and the only (biological) woman member of the Billionaires Boys Club, both popular Detroit social organizations for gays and lesbians of color. June is the mother of three bright and talented daughters, and a member of Full Truth Unity Fellowship Church.

Because of her years of involvement, Ms. Washington is highly respected among all communities of color. She is currently a counselor for the Detroit Health Department HIV/AIDS program; a training instructor for the American Red Cross HIV/AIDS program; a 101 program, member of the Detroit Urban League, and the MidWest Aids Prevention Program. Ms. Washington also served as vice-president of the Board of Directors of Affirmations, Detroit's Gay and Lesbian

Community Center, and as a youth facilitator. She also served as co-chair for Detriot's 1993 Human Rights Campaign Dinner, and served in 1995 as HRC's co-chair of the women's committee. She has received numerous awards and recognitions and she's very excited about Hotter than July. "Don't wait to Exhale—just get here and you'll find that breathing is a natural activity."

Detroit native, **Gregg Tate**, agrees. A co-founder of the 8 year old Billionaires Boys Club, Tate has seen Detriot's Black Lesbian and Gay community grow tremendously. The forty-three year old professional sales manager has helped bill the BBC's annual anniversary dinner brunch as the "Hottest social event in the Midwest." In fact, organizers of Detroit Black Gay Pride organization purposely coincided the celebration during the BBC weekend event because so many visitors come from all parts of the country.

Detroit '96 Hotter Than July will be hosted at the newly renovated Crown Plaza Pontchatrain Hotel on Detroit's scenic riverfront. Reservations can be made directly by calling 1-800 227-6963 ask about The Hotter Than July Special Discount. For more information write to: Detroit '96 Hotter Than July!, HTJ Planning Committee P.O. Box 3025 Detroit, MI 48231 or leave name/address at (313) 438-0704 extension #1.

Everyone in the life heads South for the last taste of summer! In the Life Atlanta, Black Gay and Lesbian Pride Organization will celebrate its second year as an organized event. Although still in its infancy, In The Life Atlanta has drawn a core of talented and experienced volunteers who have the enormous task of building the structure as a non profit organization and planning an event during an Olympic year.

Speaking of structure, **Calvin Murray**, has been invaluable to the organization. The experienced grant writer is also the author of the organization's bylaws and has guided the entire process from birth to incorporation. Born in Kingston, Jamaica, Calvin grew up in Brooklyn and Queens, New York. He served the United States Airforce as a dental assistant before moving to Atlanta in 1994. Calvin became actively involved with The Atlanta Project and served as assistant to the director of Our Cousin's House, an Atlanta-based African-American AIDS service organization. Mr. Murray currently serves as associate director and board member of Brothers Back-2-Back, a group which also addresses the needs of African-Americans with HIV and AIDS. "I want In The Life Atlanta to grow into a strong viable fundraiser for Black AIDS organizations. I want it to mean something more than a party." Co-founder of Anderson and Murray, Inc., Calvin runs the business side an Atlanta-based coat and hat design and manufacturing firm.

Co-chairs for ITLA are **Warren Williams**, formerly of Washington D.C. and **Queen**, from Baltimore. These recent transplants are both experienced Pride organizers. **Tara Somerville**, also from the Washington area, has an extensive track record with D.C.'s Black Gay Pride Day. Ms. Somerville, chair of the advisory board, brings passion and experience to the table and certainly doesn't mind letting you know exactly what on her mind! "I want ITLA to eventually support its own office with a staff that works year round to raise at least $500,000 annually for AIDS relief in our community." Other members of ITLA include **Tony Daniels**, community relations; **Andreas Gorey**, recording secretary and advisory board member; **Kevin Battle**, information specialist and site surveyor; and Badili Jones, development coordinator. The real thrust for a major event is being planned for 1997 after the Olympics. This year, however, a limited schedule of events has been planned as an alternate to the long lines at the clubs. The 2nd Annual Candlelight Vigil, the Southern Sunday Brunch and Club Pride all promise to entertain and empower you!

To reach ITLA write P.O. Box 89238 Atlanta, GA 30312 or call the Pride line at 404-872-6410.

Detroit Diva, June Washington (center), and Gregg Tate (standing, far left) with members of the Billionaire's Boys Club.

D.C. Black Gay Pride Pocket Guide

compiled by Greg Hutchins

For further information contact the PRIDE LINE 202-722-4780 or 202-543-7903. The Radisson Barcelo is the official PRIDE hotel, for reservations 1-800-333-3333

Friday, May 24

BLACK PRIDE KICKOFF RECEPTION
6-9 PM $25.00
202-722-4780

WELCOME TO D.C. PARTY
Sophisticated Ladies Event
10 PM-4 AM $8
202-788-1866

MALE BONDING AFFAIR
8 PM-until $10
202-610-EDGE

PUZZLES DANCE PRODUCTION
8 PM $10
202-544-0440

BLACK GAY AND LESBIAN LEADERSHIP FORUM FUNDRAISER
8 PM-midnight
202-736-3729

GET MET PARTY I
Robyn Holden, Greg Hutchins
9 PM-until $6
202-543-7903

PRIDE KICKOFF PARTY
by Women in the Life
10 PM-3 AM
202-667-8078

Saturday, May 25

CULTURAL ARTS FESTIVAL
10 AM - 5 PM $10
202-722-4780

"FAMILY REUNION"
4th Annual Jazz Brunch
12 PM-4 PM $9.95
202-543-7903

WET AFTERNOONS
Exotic Female Dancers
3 PM-7 PM $10
202-788-1866

RECEPTION BY ANTHONY L MARSHALL, ESQ.
4 PM-9 PM
202-488-8666

THE BROTHERHOOD RECEPTION FOR HIV POSITIVE BROTHERS ONLY
3 PM-6 PM free
202-842-1337

THE WEEKEND SPECIAL
6th Annual Cookout
3 PM-until $2
202-396-8580
Memorial Day Fundraiser

COOKOUT II
Hosted by Ira Palmer
3 PM-8 PM $5

GOSPEL CONCERT
Featuring Julia Nixon
7 PM-10 PM $10
202-554-6588

PRIDE DANCE PARTY
10 PM-3 AM $10
by Friends for Friends

FEMININE BONDING AFFAIR
Sophisticated Ladies Event
10 PM-4 AM $10
202-788-1866

BLACK PRIDE BOAT RIDE
Spirit of Washington
11 PM-2:30 AM $40
202-722-4780

MIDNIGHT CRUISE ON THE ODYSSEY
12 AM-2:30 $40
301-459-7377

MALE BONDING AFFAIR II
8 PM- until $10
202-610-EDGE
Sunday, May 26

Sunday, May 26

BLACK PRIDE PRAYER BREAKFAST
9 AM-11 AM
202-722-4780

UNITY SPIRITUAL CELEBRATION
12 NOON free
202-554-6588

MUNCH, CRUNCH & BRUNCH
Julio's Restaurant deck
11 AM-2 PM,1st 50 free
202-396-8580

BLACK PRIDE OUTDOOR FESTIVAL
BANNEKER FIELD
12 PM-8 PM $5

AFTER PARTY T-DANCE
by KaYo Productions
5 PM-11 PM $6
202-399-7459

A SPRING AFFAIR
by The Associates
5 PM-9 PM $40
202-722-7718

GET MET PARTY II
OUT OF THE BLUE
5 PM-Until $6
202-543-7903

BASIC BLACK IV
(The Alternative)
8 PM-Until $10
202-610-EDGE

AFTER PRIDE PARTY
Sophisticated Ladies Event
9 PM-3 AM $7
202-788-1866

AFTER PRIDE PARTY
by Women in the Life
10 PM-3 AM
202-667-8078

Monday, May 27

ANNUAL LARRY SPIVEY PICNIC
Rock Creek Park Lot 23,24
10 AM-sunset free
202-543-7903

THE EXOTIC DANCER SHOW AND DANCE
8 PM-until $7
202-610-EDGE

POYO/HINTON FOR ETC.

Venus' birthday!

5/17/61–3/2/93

Sports lover, activist Venus Landin will be honored on Friday May 17th,8:00pm, during the Venus Landin Memorial Basketball Exhibition!! Call for location of gym! 404-622-8069.

GET AWAYS

Sun and Fun On the Beach.

Welcome one, welcome all to the first annual When Women Collide Weekend Get Away in Savannah. Departing: 4:00 PM, Friday, July 12, 1996 returning: 7:00 PM Sunday, July 14, 1996; from the Avondale Mall, Atlanta.contact Doris at 770-981-6475 or Vanessa at 404-284-4475

Simplicity Attractions Unlimited of Baltimore, MD and Washington, D.C. presents the

Hint of Hawaii Weekend.

Hawaiian Weekend in Baltimore August 9th - August 11, 1996 at the Omni International Hotel, Further information Bess Knowings 718-992-9073, Bobbi Moore (301) 596-6167.

For Sophisticated Women who Demand The Best.

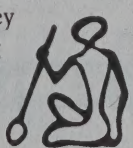
IGTA AGENT - Special Events, Travel & Theatre P.O. Box 438, NY, NY 10031 212-368-0717 FAX (212) 862-9808. Upcoming events: 5/30–6/3 **Gay & Lesbian Day at Disney;** 5/26One Day trip to Washington, D.C. **(Gay Pride Week-End):** 7/4 **Party Boat** (watch fire works) Music, Dancing & Hors D'Oeuvres New York City; 8/3 **FIRE ISLAND: Singles Bus Ride:** 9/96 **Urban League Annual Football Classic** Grambling vs Hampton

CAMPS

1996 Spring and Summer

Healing camps for Women & Children

Enjoy Old and New activities May 24,1996 to June 2,1996 AND Aug. 23,1996 to Sept.2,1996 West Milford, New Jersey Sponsored by Rising Spirits Healing & Learning Center 212-399-1873



Mountain Meadow Summer Camp

One and two week sessions AUG. 18-31,1996 Serves children of lesbian, gay and other progressive families. Write 35 W.Mt. Airy Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19119 215 848-7566

CONFERENCE

Womonwrites '96: Conference for lesbian writers. May 29-June 2,1996 Near Atlanta-Airport pickup available! Participant-led workshops,readings,meals,dormitory sleeping, lake. To register early write Womomwrites,2656 Rock Creek Rd, Burnsville, NC 28714

THEATRE

Theresa Hightower and Iris Farmer are back on stage!!! and JOMANDI'S Got 'em in

"Blues in the Night"

April 26 - May 19 at the 14th Street Playhouse. TICKETMASTER ARTS LINE 404-817-8700

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Self-Publishing and Distribution; Seven Points To Get You Started. Thurs., May 2 - 7:30PM

Women Under Siege: Violence Against Women in South Africa. Thursday, May 19 - 7:30PM

CHARIS: books & more
1189 Euclid Avenue, NE
Atlanta, 404 524-0304

PARTIES

Atlanta Brothers of 30 Something Special Memorial Weekend with EMOJA Sat. May 25, 1996 Club Ultimate 404-350-9758

SOPHISTICATED LADIES PRODUCTION'S EVENTS FOR BLACK LESBIAN & GAY PRIDE MAY '96

Washington, D.C.

B L A C K P R I D E

WEEKEND '96

Friday, May 24th

Sophisticated Ladies & Kayo Productions'

Welcome to Washington Party

THE CIRCLE BAR
1629 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
1 Block from Dupont Circle Metro

Free Give-a-ways, win VIP Weekend Passes

10 PM–4 AM • $8 Cover • Guest DJ
202/788-1866 info.

Sophisticated Ladies Productions'

Feminine Bonding Party

JENNIES SHOW LOUNGE
Inside Waterside Mall, SW
In front of Waterside Mall Metro exit, 5 levels of secured underground parking

Receive $3 off if you attended the WET Calendar Party

10 PM–4 AM • $10 Cover • DJ: India
202/788-1866 info

Saturday, May 25th

Sophisticated Ladies Productions'

Soft-N-Wet 1997 Calendar Autograph Signing Party

THE WET
#52 L Street, S.E.
1 blk from Navy Yard Metro

Come see our Calendar Girls dance live in open showers
Free Food give-a-ways

3 PM– 7 PM • $10 Cover • DJ: Kathy
202/788-1866 info

Don't Miss These Pounding Parties!

Sunday, May 25th

Sophisticated Ladies Productions'

After Pride Party

THE HUNG JURY
1819 H Street, NW
1 blk from Farragut West Metro

Come see our Soft-N-Wet Calendar Girls live! Win Autographed 1997 Soft-N-Wet Calendars

Showtime: Midnight
8 PM–3 AM • $7 Cover • DJ: Smooth'
202/788-1866 info

KAYO & ATIRA Productions'

After Pride Tea Dance

GEORGIA CAFÉ
2225 Georgia Ave, NW
(across from Banneker field at the Howard Inn)
5 PM–11 PM • $6 Cover
DJ: NYC's Cameron
202/399-7459 info.

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Avenue. Sun. Worship 7:30 PM (404) 815-0036.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AID Atlanta African-American Gay Outreach—404-885-6800,x-271

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Prevention Education for Asians and Pacific Islanders—culturally and lingustically appropriate services. Contact Jennifer Kim (770) 936-0969 em: KCSC1996@aol.com

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive,, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

American Cancer Society—Lesbian and Gay Cancer Support Groups. (404) 841-0550. Meets 3rd Thursday of each month.

API-QXX—A social group for Asian & Pacific Islander queer women 770-451-4389

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, GA 30333. (404) 662-9010.

A. Lorde Collective—African-American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment. Hotline: (313) 862-3396.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Bisexual Resource Line—A combined voicemail project of several Bay Area Bi Groups. (415) 703-7977.

Bisexual Womyn of Colour—BIWOC since 1991. P.O. Box 020136, Brooklyn, NY 11202-136. (212) 479-7886.

Black & White Men Together—POB 1334, Atl., GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta—P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, GA 30312. (404) 872-1097.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Lesbians with Children—(404) 378-4135

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

BLUeS—Bronx Lesbians United in Sisterhood, Event Organization. (212) 330-9196

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays—(312) 871-2117.

Cinnamon Productions—Womyn of Color event organizers. (718) 994-0028.

C.O.L.O.R.—Coming Out Living Our Reality spiritual/social group for g/l/bi. 404-299-6710 or 404-299-0830

Creation Woman—poets/artists & affiliates meet last Sun. each month. (310) 422-1970.

D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals—(202) 388-8078.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Fe*mail—a D.C. publication for Lesbians of Color. P.O. Box 75392, Washington, DC 20013. (202) 546-7040

Friend of Friends—(301) 735-5023; P.O. Box 77075, Washington, D.C. 20013

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Community Organization Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teacher's Network—P.O. Box 5512, Atlanta, Georgia 31107. (404) 872-4320.

Georgia Equality Project—GEP, P.O. Box 78351, Atl, GA 30357-2351. (404) 662-4030

GLAAD—Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. (404) 873-2002.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atl., GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—For Women of Color (404) 523-0228.

HRC—Human Rights Campaign. (770) 840-6969.

International Black Writers & Artists—meet 2nd Sunday Bladwin Hills/Crenshaw (213) 964-3721.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

Malebox—Meeting black men. P.O. Box 75392, Wash., D.C. 20013.

Minority AIDS Project of Philly and Vicinity, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 218, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1937

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

North Carolina Mobilization '96—P.O. Box 28718, Raleigh, NC 28718. (918) 828-3311

our cousin's house—An African American AIDS Organization. P.O. Box 10709, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 758-0397.

ONYX/Chicago—Leather Social Club for Men of Color and their friends. 1340 W. Irving Park Road, Suite 188, Chicago IL 60613.

PAY—Pride for Asian Youth-social/support program for gay/lesian Asian-American youth 770-451-4389

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Pink Triangle Productions—Gay Female Entertainment Party Source. (770) 723-7292.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Pyramid Productions—Cultural Shows & Dances. (718) 622-5093.

Q-GLU—Queens Gays & Lesbians United. (718) 639-4951.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atl., GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

SAGE—Senior Action in a Gay Environment. (212) 741-2247.

SALGA—South Asian Lesbian Gay Association; P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276-0050; (212) 294-2550; Email: salganyc@dorsai.org

Second Sunday Discussion Group—POB 310, Atlanta, GA 30301. (404) 325-7321.

Shades of Brown—Professional Womyn/Men of Color. (212) 439-1024.

Shades of Ebony Connections—For Women of Color, Dallas, (214) 570-5795.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 350-9758.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—750 Cascade Pl. #7 Atalnta, GA 30310 404-752-7938

Stonewall Bar Association—Professional organization for attorneys, legal assistants and other related professions. P.O. Box 7708, Atl, GA 30357-0708. (770) 621-4663.

The ADODE MUSE—a black gay male literary group; 348 Berean Ave. S.E., Atlanta, Ga 30312. (404) 521-2515.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.—1108 Locust St., 1st Floor, Phila. PA 19107. Education, prevention and support programs for sexual minority people of color. For more information, please contact (215) 627-6233.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

The Men's Gathering—P.O. Box 190869, Dallas, Texas 75219-0869,(214) 521-5342, ext. 876. Meeting times: 4th Friday of each month, 7 pm

Tres—Dance Parties for Womyn of Color. (718) 670-3643

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. (404) 892-0475 or (404) 373-8915 trikatl@mindspring.com

ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage)—1626 N. Wilcox Ave., #190, L.A., CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

When Women Collide—770-981-6475,404 284-4475

Woman's Monthly—Periodical calendar for woman's community. 1213 Morningside Dr., Silver Springs, MD 20904

Women in the Life—D.C.'s Black Lesbian party hotline. (202) 667-8078.

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project—8610 S. Sepulveda Blvd, Ste 200, L.A., CA 90045 (310) 216-3200.

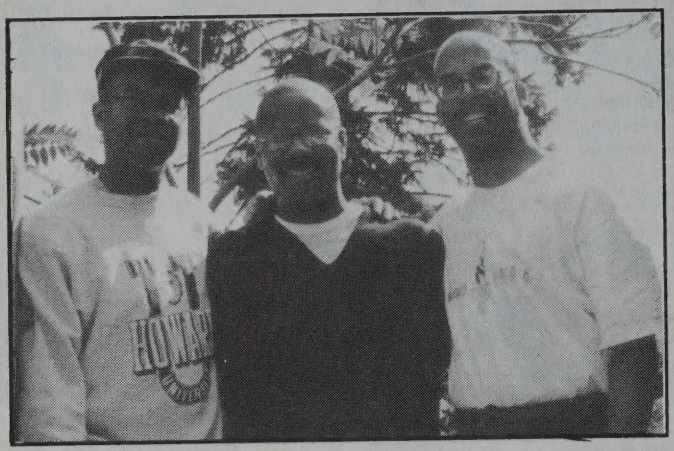
WRFG Radio,Gay Graffiti with Deborah Paget—Thursdays, 7–8 PM.Crossroads with Baldelie Jones—3rd Thursday, 7–8 PM.Sister Love, Sister's Time—6 PM Thursdays"Alternative Talk"—2nd/4th Fridays, 6PM.

Yahimba, Lesbians of African Descent—1012 1/2 Dodge, Evanston, IL 60202 or (708) 328-7715

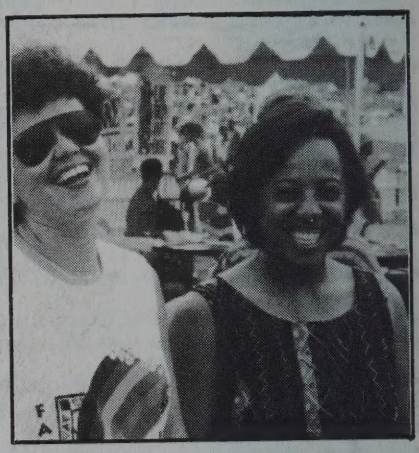
YouthPride—(404) 815-9965,Teen Support Group (13-18 yo) Wed. eve. 6:30-8:00; Young Adult Personal Growth Group (18-24 yo): 8:30-10:00. 1379 Tullie Rd.

ZAMI—Atlanta's premiere African American lesbian organization meets 2nd and 4th Sundays from 6:30 until 8:30 PM. Call (404) 370-1392.

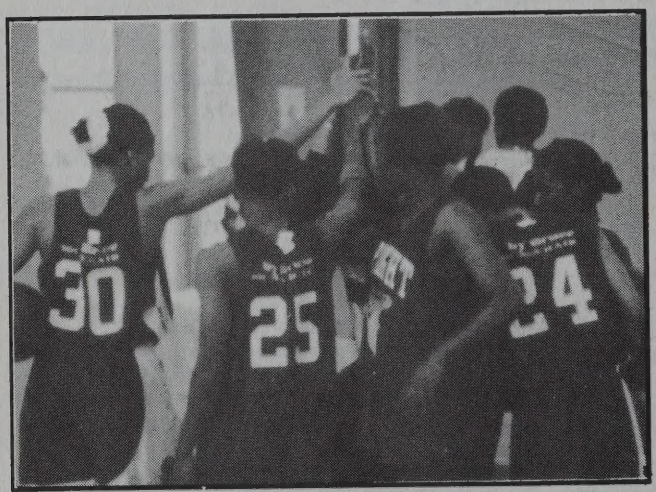
OUT & about



(l to r) Derdre Caple, Rich Williams, and Gregory Victorianne in Roxbury, Massachusetts.



Dona Williams (l) and Lisa Gasque of Augusta, Georgia



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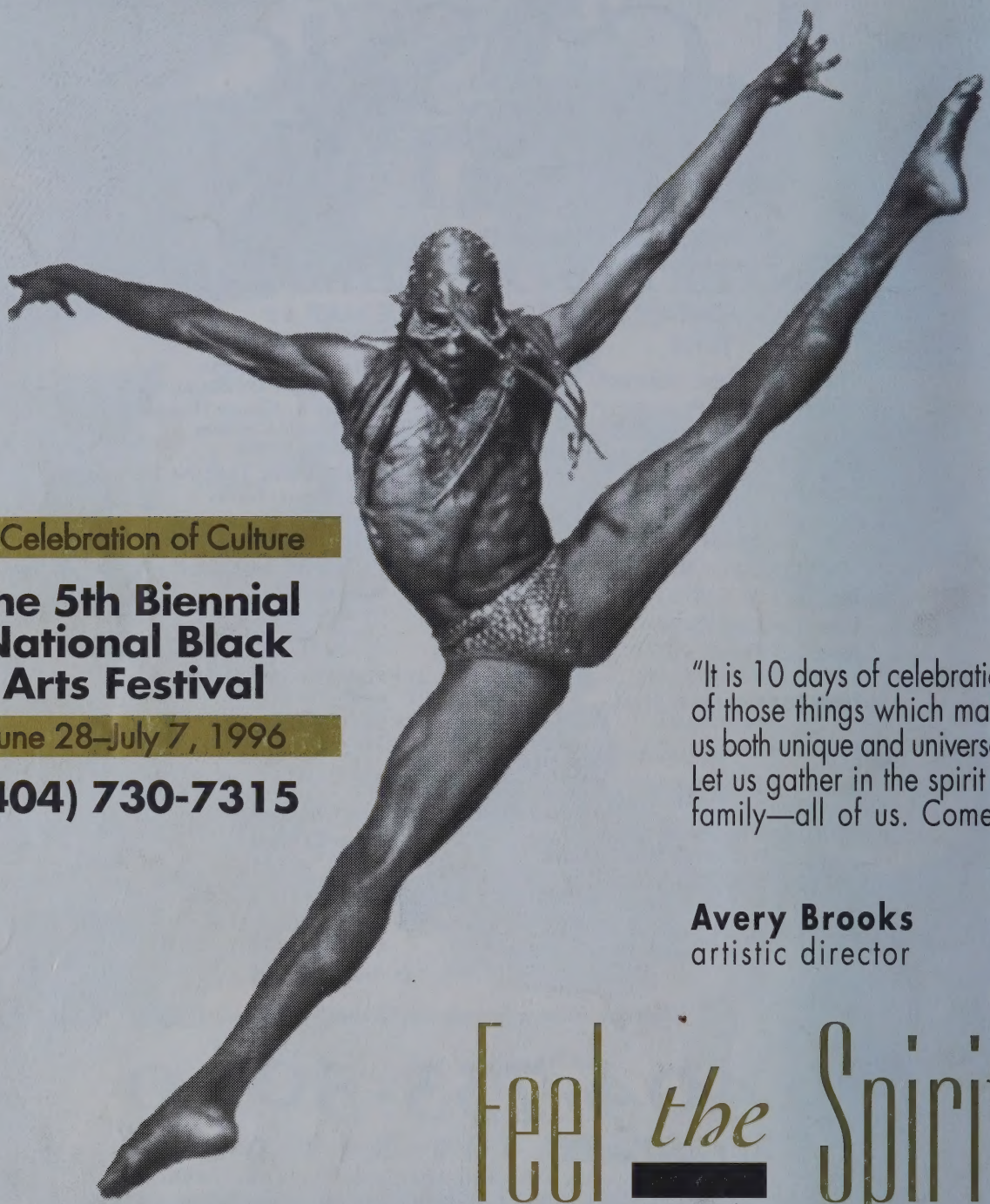

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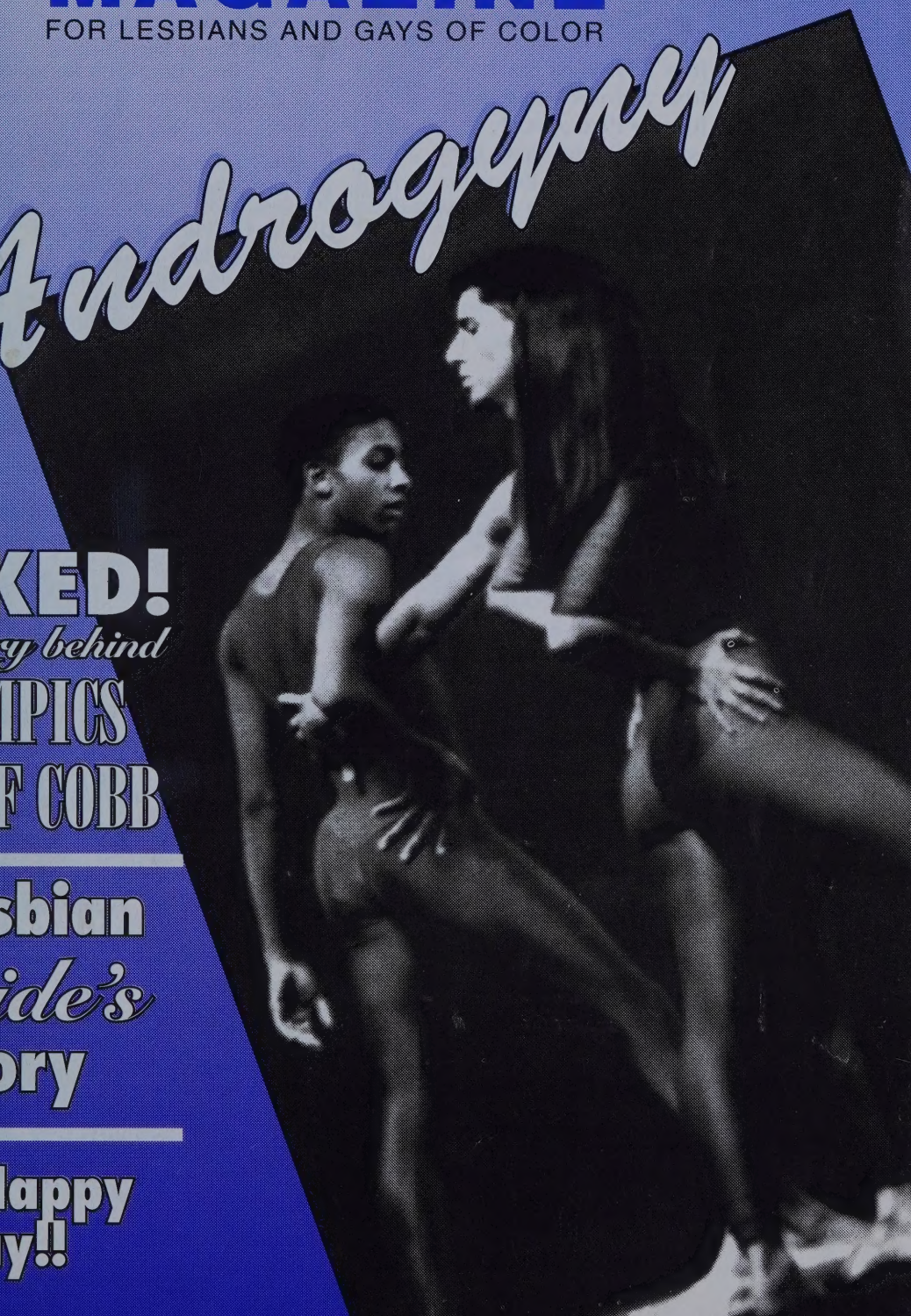

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A Community Update

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Date

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Time

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM (Eastern Time)

Location

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3300 Lenox Road
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Reservations/Information

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1-800-433-4584 (outside New York State)

1-800-521-1177 (within New York State)

**No names will be taken; reservations are for seating purposes only.*

This program is supported through an unrestricted educational grant by Glaxo Wellcome Inc.

LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR:

It was truly a pleasure being a guest at the fund raising Barbecue for Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney. Aside from the beautiful atmosphere, the delicious food and candid conversations which covered a plethora of topics including the latest issue of Venus, Freaknic, HIV/AIDS treatments, racism and the guest of honor's political platform, I especially enjoyed Congresswoman McKinney's heartfelt remarks exclaiming the immeasurable contributions made by gay men, bisexuals and lesbians.

I support Congresswoman McKinney with my dollars and my vote because she is tough, tenacious and thoughtful and I believe that she can make a difference in our lives... in fact she already has.

Chip Williford
Decatur, GA

DEAR EDITOR:

Thank you so much for bringing us Venus. It's full of excellent info and articles. I really enjoyed reading and sharing it with everyone else. Keep up the good work! I'm hooked!

Oren Smith
New Orleans, LA

DEAR EDITOR:

I just wanted to take a moment and thank you for the wonderful service you provide our community. Because I can't "come out" right now, your magazine's importance in my life is even greater... providing a bridge between sanity and despair. Keep up the great work and keep those presses rolling.

Anonymous
Opelika, AL

Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

June 1996
Vol. 2., No. 6

Editor in Chief	Charlene Cothran
Health Editor	Leonard Jack, Jr., Ph.D.
Art Director	C.C.'s Attitude
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by Keiko Guest
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Contents

JUNE 1996

ANDROGYNY!

an interview with choreographer Alex Pelham

PAGE 11

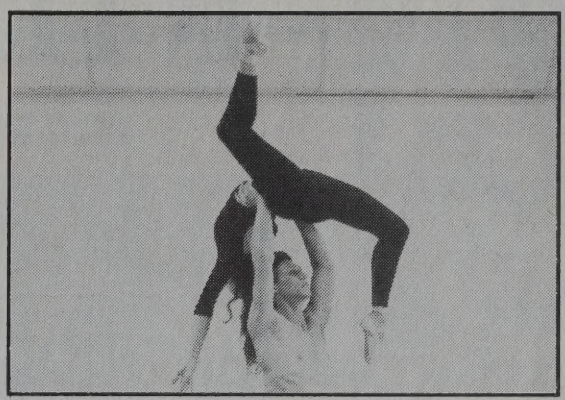

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Help When You Need It!!

What you should know about viatical settlements

PAGE 17

PLUS

Olympics Out of Cobb: Spiked! ..... Page 7

A Lesbian Bride's Story ..... Page 23

Ask Marian! ..... Page 29
A New Advice Column

The Hard Work of Inclusiveness ..... Page 39

National Black Arts Festival ..... Page 40
A Schedule of Events

FATIGUE

New Concepts for Excelling in '96

SELF-EMPOWERMENT IN HIV DISEASE

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Treatment Resource Specialist, AIDS Survival Project

New Directions in the Evaluation & Management of **Fatigue:** A Practical Approach

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Olympics Out of Cobb: The Inside Story

The unlikely duo who led the fight have written a book — and not everyone who was involved is amused by their version of events.

By Richard Shumate

Jon-Ivan Weaver and Pat Hussain were a decidedly odd couple when they joined forces in 1994. He was baby-faced neophyte to gay politics, more likely to be taken for Joe Prep than Luke Sissyfag (at least before the latter's Christian conversion.) She was a loudly outspoken veteran activist, frequently self-described as a "pissed off black dyke."

In fact, Hussain recounts that when Weaver, whom she didn't know, first approached her to get involved in the Olympics Out of Cobb Coalition, she refused. "I've been deserted on more than one occasion by a white man," she says. Once she did agree to join Weaver as co-chair, she recalls telling her partner, Cherry, that if Weaver cut and ran when things got hot, "I'll cut his heart out and feed it to him."

He didn't, and she didn't. And in the course of their successful fight to get the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games to move volleyball competition and the Olympic torch run from suburban Cobb County (whose governing board has officially condemned the "gay lifestyle"), the two became fast friends.

Olympics Out of Cobb, Spiked!, a new book self-published by Weaver and Hussain, is the story of that emerging relationship—and much more. It is also takes readers behind the scenes of the battle the two Atlantans led for more than two years against incredible odds. Using reconstructed dialogue, they reveal the details of their negotiations with top ACOG officials, including the news that anonymous supporters within ACOG were secretly supplying them with help and information.

Activist authors Jon Ivan Weaver and Pat Hussain.

"The impetus to write this book is to tell our story. Too often, we as lesbians and gay men don't tell our stories, and it was important that another one of our stories wasn't lost," says Hussain. "It shows that if a ragtag bunch of queers can take on the Olympic community and win, then we can do so much more in our own community."

The book also tells very personal stories of the stresses that leading an activist crusade put on Weaver's business and both of their relationships. Indeed, Spiked! is dedicated to their partners, Diego Sans and Cherry Hussain.

Among the newsiest tidbits in the book: Weaver and Hussain recount how a top Olympic official used anti-gay epithets and issued a veiled threat against Weaver in a phone conversation with his partner. An ACOG official with whom they were

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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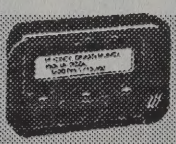

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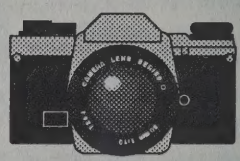

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From The Editor

It's PRIDE time again! Each year the concept of celebrating Gay and Lesbian Pride changes a bit for me. My connection to the overall season of celebration grows stronger. My emotions run deeper. Why has this grown to be such a special time? What am I so PROUD of?

When I think back to the very first Atlanta Pride Festival that I attended 4 years ago, I can clearly recall my buddy Venus insisting that I come and join in the march. She was shining up her truck that morning for the parade, full of hope that she could ad some flavor, chocolate that is, to the scene. I chuckled as she admitted that after all her efforts to gather a people of color contingent she was sure that the only brown faces marching or riding down Peachtree would be her own and a few faithful AALGA members. Curiosity and her enthusiasm got me as close as the Kinko's on 5th and Peachtree where I just happened to be running off some flyers when the floats began to pass by. I eased outside and stood next to Kinko's door trying to look like an innocent bystander when I suddenly caught a glimpse of Venus' truck.

There she was partying down Peachtree, with a truck full of gorgeous brown, black and red men and women. Blasting her favorite "I Am Every Woman," the joy in their smiles and waves seemed to draw more of us into the street. As Venus' truck passed by Kinko's I made the connection. My cloak of shame dropped and I stepped out of that garment as I left the curb that day. It was a grand afternoon. The memories are very special.

So, What am I PROUD of this year? I'm proud that my mother shared Venus for the first time with my aunt and her best friend. I'm proud that my sister, whose opinion of gays & lesbians a few years ago was, let's say less than favorable, consistently distributes Venus to other students in her writing classes and more importantly I'm proud that she invited me lovingly to come out to her two sons whom I adore. I'm proud that my 12 year old nephew asked my permission to present Venus to his teacher at school. (Kids are sharp! Yes, he knew all along!)

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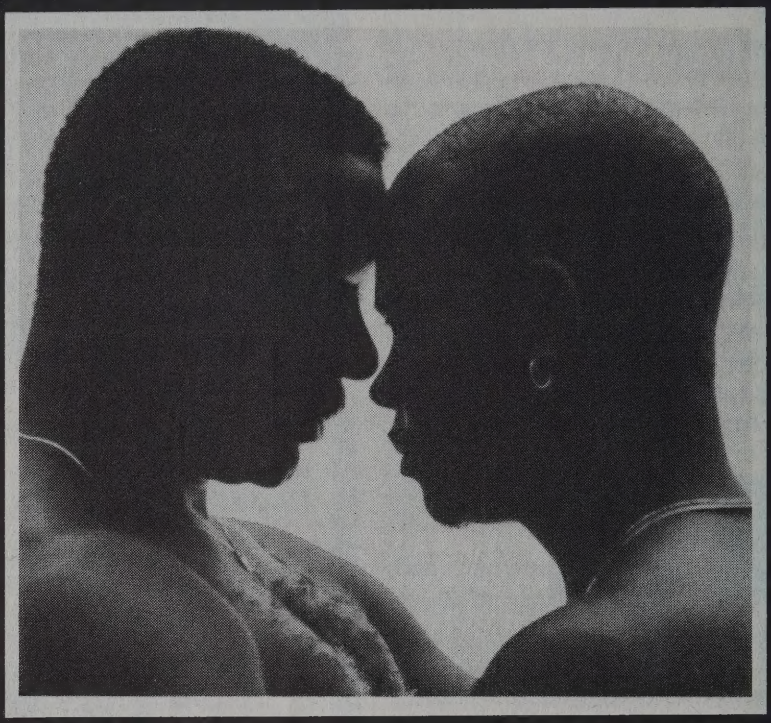

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ANDROGYNY

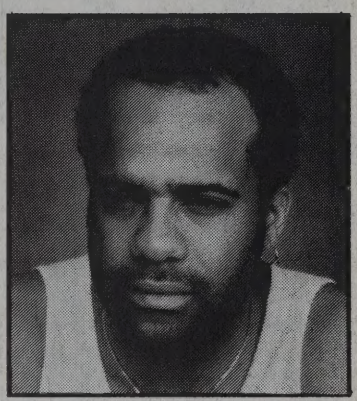
An Interview with Alex Pelham

Since civilization began, society has premised its goals and dreams on the pursuit of love, compassion and self-actualization. Clearly the performing arts provides an invaluable tool for enabling any healthy, functioning society to achieve these ends. In turn, society utilizes the arts to reflect the emotional and mental plight of the human psyche, rendering it pure and beautiful.

In support of these artistic endeavors, Kolours Dance/Atlanta aims to produce bodies of work that challenge its audiences, while effecting a unity and cohesion seldom encountered in the arts community. "Androgyny", the new ballet by Kolours Dance demonstrates that division destroys, and that by simply recognizing our similarities we ameliorate our ignorance and embrace and reconcile alternative perspectives.

J. Alex Pelham, artistic director and founder of Kolours Dance/Atlanta, originates from New York City and began his dance training at the age of seven with famous Broadway choreographer Henry LeTang. By age eleven, Pelham toured Japan, appeared in numerous television specials and commercials, and performed the original role of "The Tap Dance Kid." After ten years with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, Pelham accepted full scholarships from both the Martha Graham School and the world renowned School of American Ballet. He has performed with various companies, including the Newark Dance Theatre and Fred Benjamin Dance Company. He has also performed the works of Talley Beatty, George Faison and Igal Perry. Pelham also graduated magna cum laude form Clark Atlanta University where during his matriculation, he taught classes in contemporary technique in and around the city, creating a demand for his choreography.

Kolours Dance/Atlanta is eight members strong, with dancers from American Ballet Theater, Metropolitan opera Ballet, International Ballet Rotaru and Hungarian National Ballet. The company repertoire consists of over twenty ballets, including the beautiful "New Birth," and multifaceted "Catalyst." "Androgyny" will premiere on Friday June 21, at 8:00 p.m. and Saturday June 22, at 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. at Pace Academy Fine Arts Center located at 966 West Paces Ferry RD. For tickets call 404-724-0928.



J. Alex Pelham, artistic director and founder of Kolours Dance/Atlanta.

Venus: The piece seems to reflect your interest in the politics of diversity.

Alex Pelham: This piece is not just about men who look like women, women who look like men or people who are genderless. It's any two stereotypical opposites that have become a hybrid of each other. Someone who's black and someone who's white, someone who's tall and someone who's short, someone who's running for the president of the USA, and someone who runs the Mafia. To me it's an understanding, "androgynist," the term is centered around understanding someone who may be a little different than you. Allowing

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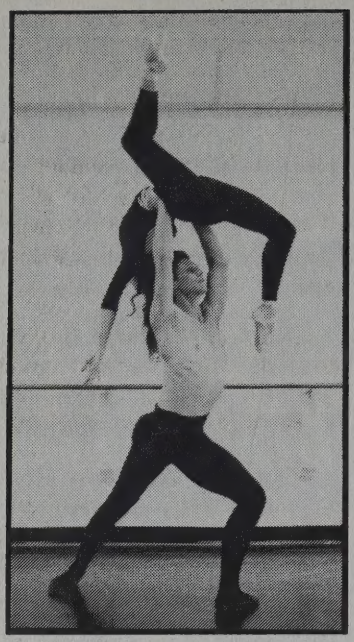

Androgyny

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

people to be who they need to be, so they can be happy and make their own contributions to society. This piece is about communicating, objectivity, sharing, and the fostering of human relationships.

VM: As a youngster you trained with some of the most highly respected choreographers in the world. Who has inspired you most?

AP: Alvin Ailey, because of the obstacles he overcame, (mainly racism) he was a pioneer who endured through adversity and conflict, both personally and professional. Having studied there and danced with the company, I was given a chance to grow and expand artistically, with some of the most talented and professionally inspiring dancers in the world. I am very grateful to the excellence Mr. Ailey exposed me to at a young age.

But there were others: Donald Byrd, Louis Johnson, Walter Ramsey and a few others who were incredibly talented, and did not allow racism to stifle their creativity.

VM: Who inspires you most in everyday life?

AP: I would have to say that would be me. I don't believe you can inspire or motivate anyone else, unless you can create that same effect for you. I inspire me! You have to have something for yourself first before you can share it with anyone else, and expect the relationship to be successful, professional, romantic, or platonic.

If you don't have something that is uniquely yours, that only you can give to someone else, then you're really not giving your life any meaning. You have to start within, and then you can move outward and inspire others.

VM: Why the company name KOLOURS?

AP: It's a philosophy; it represents the diaspora of different views. The infinite nature of myself and the dancers that come under the KOLOURS umbrella. KOLOURS is about exploration, not limiting oneself. It's important to incorporate any and all cultures that make up who you are in your work, if for no other reason for the humanistic benefits. There's nothing wrong with representing someone else or an alternative point of view from you own: that helps you with objectivity as well as makes you a better person.

Performing for a 90's audience requires you to do work that is about issues that are prevalent to them and provocative enough to make them think. They need something they can relate to and hold on to as well. Art can be so much more than just fantasy; more than "The Nutcracker." KOLOURS represents that as well.

VM: You co-direct eight highly skilled company members with Elaine Wadsworth. What does she bring to the work

AP: She's my right hand. She runs rehearsals when I'm not there, and she is a fabulous actress, so she helps the dancers bring emotions to the extremely physical demanding work we perform. She gets the dancers to become the movement as opposed to just technically doing the moves. This helps the audience to see the dancers' passion for the dance, which is important, because if the dancers aren't feeling and don't express it, then the audience won't get it.

Her acting ability and her maturity are her greatest assets. I'm working with her to get her directing skills up to where they need to be. we also share a lot of the same beliefs and philosophies on creativity and artistic impression; that helps us keep the vision for the company focused.

VM: What is it that you hope the audience will take with them after seeing "Androgyny"?

AP: A heightened respect for others and increased self worth. It's OK to be who I am and it's OK for you to be who you are.

The Story Behind Olympics Out of Cobb: Spiked!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

negotiating also told them that the Olympic movement's own surveys showed as many as 40 percent of the athletes competing in the Olympics are gay or lesbian.

So far, those revelations haven't created much of a stir in Atlanta. What has caused tempers to rise, however, are descriptions by Weaver and Hussain of obstacles they feel were put in their way by people within Atlanta's gay/lesbian community. Coming in for particular critical mention in the book is the Cobb Citizens Coalition, an anti-resolution group formed by gays and lesbians who live in Cobb County.

Weaver and Hussain (who live in the city and not Cobb) write that they got very little support from the Cobb Citizens Coalition, whose leaders are characterized as viewing Olympics Out of Cobb as too radical. The Cobb group is also portrayed as willing to support a compromise that would have allowed Olympic volleyball to remain in Cobb by changing language in the anti-gay resolution without rescinding it.

"Someone's penchant for drama has superseded the facts," says Elaine Hill, who was then co-chair of the coalition and is singled out by name in the book. "Anyone who has followed the activities of the Cobb Citizens Coalition and myself knows that we would not compromise by allowing anti-gay language to remain in the resolution."

"The Cobb Citizens Coalition supports and applauds the efforts of the Olympics Out of Cobb Coalition. However, our focus is broader," says Hill. "Our community has different styles and opinions, and that is positive. If fact, that should be expected."

As the book has circulated through Atlanta, Weaver says what has generated the most comment is his description of a conversation between he and some other activists over his attire. He says he was chastised for wearing his "Olympics Out of Cobb" T-shirt to negotiating sessions with ACOG, instead of a suit. One of those doing the chastising was Carl Lange, former executive director of GLAAD/Atlanta, who spent a great deal of time doing media relations work for Olympics Out of Cobb.

"I just have a problem with the whole intent of this book," says Lange. He maintains that coalition meetings were supposed to be confidential discussions where people could be comfortable throwing out a variety of suggestions for discussion—and that coalition members agreed not to reveal their discussions to people outside the group. (Weaver says his understanding was that the confidentiality agreement was only designed to keep ACOG from learning information and only applied to the period when negotiations were taking place.)

The book has caused so much intra-community strife that GLAAD/Atlanta is planning to host a forum in order to allow Weaver, Hussain and others mentioned in the book to discuss their differences. No date has been set.

Both Weaver and Hussain insist their intent was not to grind axes with people with whom they had difficulties during their fight.

"But I don't think you can tell a story like this and not tell what happened within the community," says Weaver. "Our attempt was not really to characterize what people did but just to say what people did and let readers draw their own conclusions."

Weaver says he also hopes the book will outline for future activists what strategies proved most effective.

"I think the biggest lesson we learned is to be very focused. There were so many times when we could have been sidetracked into different issues. But we just kept our focus on getting the Olympics out of Cobb," says Weaver.

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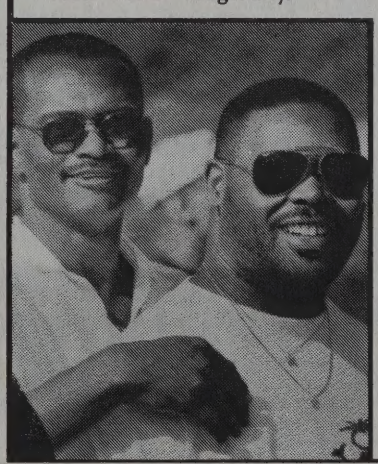

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PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name:. . . . . Lenore M. Rivers

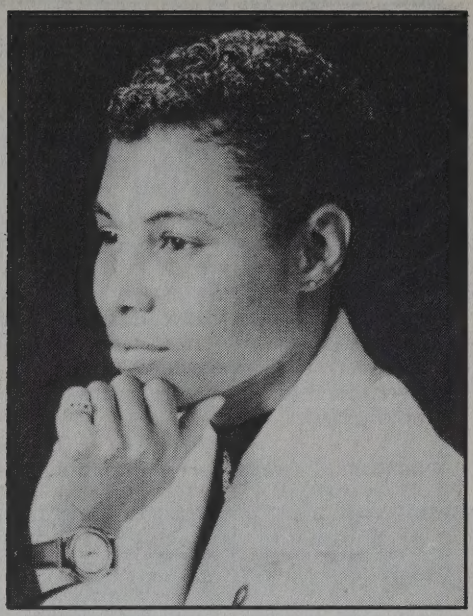
Age: 37

Status: . . . . . Single

Career: . . . . . Prevention Specialist and Photographer

Hometown: . New York, NY

Latest Book:. "Pearls of Passion: A Treasury of Lesbian Erotica" by C. Allyson Lee and Makeda Silvera



Lenore resides in Los Angeles and serves as the program coordinator of the AIDS prevention team's "Womyn Love 2" erotica series, a project of the NBGLLF. Lenore is also working on a 1998 calendar of gorgeous African-American Lesbians. Co-founder of Black S.A.B.L.E., Inc. and Le GEM Productions, Lenore is busy preparing to host a soul food brunch and showcase extravaganza in Hollywood on July 4th Weekend!

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Viatical Settlements

Help When You Need It

by M. Bryan Freeman

After the diagnosis of a terminal illness, it's quite understandable and normal to feel scared, depressed and confused. Along with these feelings comes the realization that life may change drastically and can include disability, large medical bills and a decreased quality of life. Still, through appropriate support, a healthy attitude and medical miracles, the prognosis may brighten.

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

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This can mean money for the payment of medical bills, house payments or a decent quality of life that many of us take for granted. The term "viatical settlement" is new, but the concept has been around for a few years. Prior to 1989, most of what we call viatical settlements were set up as private transactions arranged by individuals. Today, the process is simpler, with the advent of viatical settlement companies. Companies like mine act as brokers, working with an individual to find an investment company that will pay the highest amount possible for a policy.

A viatical settlement broker takes the work out of the process for the individual. Personally, I try to streamline the process by having the policyholder complete only one set of paperwork instead of many different ones. We can then provide a preliminary answer as to how we think your policy will sell, including the amount you may receive and when those funds might be available. We also like to ensure that our clients are completely comfortable with the transaction—they can back out at any phase of the process.

Once a policyholder "viaticates" their life insurance policy, the company which purchases the policy is responsible for premium payments for the remainder of the life of the policy. The policyholder is no longer responsible for those payments. It is important to realize that the amount you can receive for a policy is based on the type of policy you own as well as life expectancy. In other words, the shorter the life expectancy, the higher the purchase price of the policy. We try to help our clients strike the right balance so that they viaticate policies when they can get the largest percentage of the policy's value while still having the time to make the most of the funds.

Along with its devastation, AIDS certainly has taught us important lessons about working together and finding new ways to help those in need. Fortunately, one of those solutions—a bright spot of hope on this sometimes overwhelming landscape—is the viatical settlement.

M. Bryan Freeman is the founder and president of Benefits America, the South's oldest gay-owned and operated viatical settlement firm. He is an advertiser and friend of Venus

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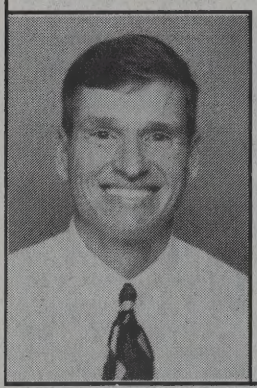

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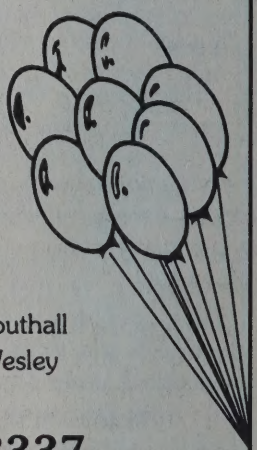

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Miss Atlanta Pride 1996

Niesha Dupre pictured.

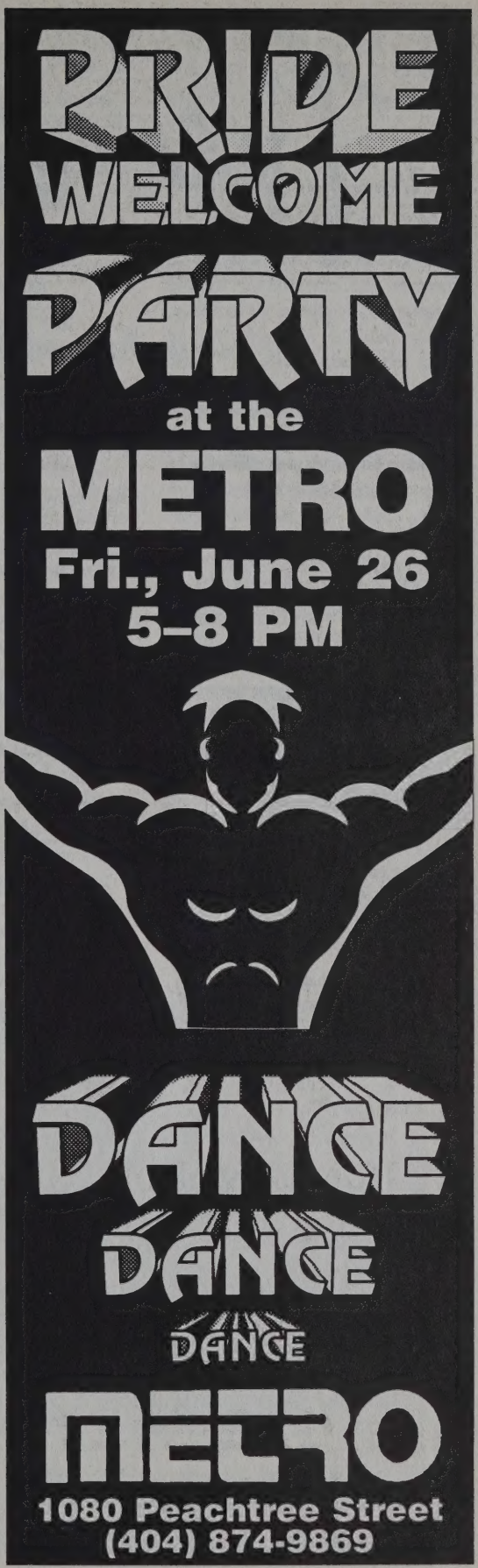
Miss Atlanta Pride 1996 is an official fund raiser for the Atlanta Pride Celebration and is sponsored by Brushstrokes. Glamorous female impersonators from around the Southeast will gather to compete for the title and $1700.00 in prize monies. The theme of the pageant is "Pride in Oneself."

Brushstrokes is sponsoring this pageant to help the transvestite/transsexual community feel more a part of Atlanta's Gay and Lesbian pride celebration.

"It is our way of thanking them for their fund raising efforts and their fight for gay rights," says Tom Schloeder, Co-owner of Brushstrokes, "they have always been the most visible part of our community."

Mark Jackson adds, "The TV/TS community has often been neglected during gay pride. We wanted an event to honor them and what they have done for our community."

The pageant is being hosted by the Armory and is sponsored in part by Etcetera Magazine. It will be held at the Armory (836 Juniper Street) on Monday, June 17, 1996 at 9:30 P.M. Admission is $5.00 and all money raised will benefit the Atlanta Pride Celebration.



The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

A Litany for Survival:

The Life and Work of Audre Lorde Airs Nationally June 18 on PBS

'The work of the poet within each one of us is to envision what has not yet been and to work with every fiber of who we are to make the reality pursuit of those visions irresistible'

—Audre Lorde

New York—Poet, lover, mother, warrior—Audre Lorde is a fiercely passionate American visionary. Her poetry and prose speak to her deepest convictions—love and anger, civil rights and sexuality, family politics and the glories of nature. She gave voice to a political generation and became a role model not only for Black women but for everyone who believes, as she did, the "liberation is not the private province of any one particular group." In 1992 Lorde lost her battle with breast cancer but she leaves behind a rich and vital legacy. A Litany for Survival, a powerful profile of African-American Audre Lorde will air nationally Tuesday, June 18 at 10 p.m. ET on PBS (check local listings), as part of P.O.V., Positive View Point, broadcast television's only continuing forum for independent non-fiction film.

"Audre Lorde has been a pioneer in making available her voice as a teacher, a survivor, an activist, and a crusader against bigotry," says filmmaker Ada Gay Griffin, who made A Litany for Survival with co-director Michelle Parkerson. The two spent eight years collaborating with Lorde, weaving together a richly textured portrait of a gifted, strong-willed woman who embraced life's moments and focused her energies to fight for civil justice, women's equality and lesbian and gay rights.

SpeakOut

Washington—Emerald City Productions, ECP, presented the third annual showcase of Black Gay and Lesbian Writers and their work. Regarding this year's event, Terry W. Sydney says "ECP recognizes the need to celebrate and embrace writers in our community. 'SpeakOut II,' gives the community and its writers the opportunity and stimulus for dialogue. The focus of this year was "Community through Unity," as it pertains to literature; specifically the impact of black gay literature and the bridges it crosses between the gay and heterosexual community. The program began with dramatic presentations dedicated to Audre Lorde, Essex Hemphill and Arthur Johnson. Reading in 'Speak-Out II' were Stanley Clay, founder and publisher of SBC; Rodney McCoy Jr., poet; Sabrina Sojourner, author of Psychic Scars and Other Mad Thoughts; Michael St. Andress, performance artist; Jalal Naeem, poet; Rebecca Helem, performance artist, poet; Terry Sidney, playwright, producer and performance artist; B. Michael Hunter, editor; and, Robert Reid-Pharr, English Scholar at Johns Hopkins University.

Kids Have Their Own Fun at Pride!

Atlanta Pride is very pleased to announce the best Youth and Family program we have ever had. Co-chairs Amber Feldman and Kristy Jo are both experienced children's theatre specialists. Activities throughout the weekend will include performances on stage, a storytelling tent, an art area and a special section for families in the Pride Parade.

Bill Lansden for Georgia Senate Seat 39th District

Atlanta—Local businessman Bill Lansden is running for the 39th District Georgia State Senate Seat. Mr. Lansden stated that, "as a proven business owner I am able to bring the skills necessary in business to the state legislature. For too long politicians have acted unresponsively and with callous disregard for small businesses and the neighborhoods they serve. We need a state senator who will serve to encourage business development in established commercial areas, who will protect

our neighborhoods and who will be responsive to the social needs of our diverse 39th District. I intend to be a visible, active State Senator."

Ruth Waters and Phill Wilson, NBGLLF Co-Founders receive Founder's Award from organization Co-Chairs, Vallerie Wagner and Stephan Oxendine.

Catalog of HIV-Related Standards of Care

New York—Community Prescription Services (CPS), the nation's only HIV+ owned and operated mail order prescription service, announced the publication of its most recent issue of INFOPACK, a resource-filled AIDS treatment newsletter that is distributed FREE of charge to AIDS service organizations, health care professionals, clinics and individuals nationwide. Free copies of the INFOPACK are available by calling 1-800-842-0502 or em: info@prescript.com.

HRC Welcomes Passage of Ryan White Care Act

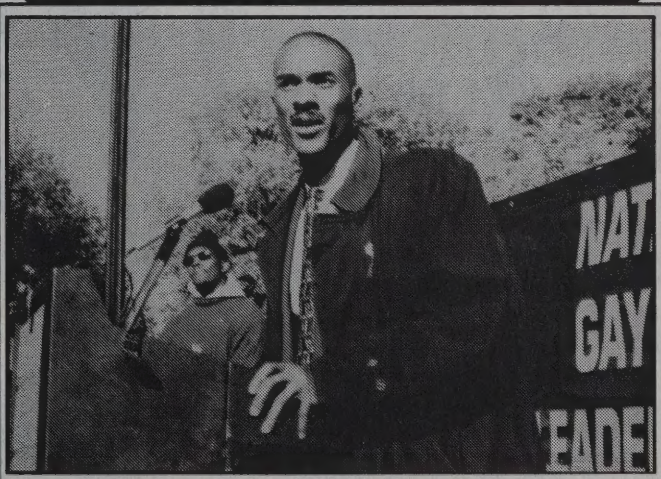
Washington—The Human Rights Campaign expressed relief that Congress has finally passed the Ryan White Care Act, a long-overdue measure that will provide $738 million for the care and treatment of people with HIV and AIDS. HRC played a key role in nullifying an amendment to the bill, proposed by anti-gay Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., to prohibit federal funds from going to gay organizations that "encourage or promote homosexuality." The Helms amendment was replaced by language proposed by Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., that prohibits the use of Ryan White money to directly promote intravenous drug use or sexual activity, either hetero- or homosexual.

New Leather Club Formed for Men of Color: Onyx

Chicago—A new social club has joined the SM, leather, fetish community in the Windy City. ONYX/Chicago. The primary purpose is to provide an informational and social outlet for African-American, Latino and Asian men and their friends involved or interested in the leather/SM/fetish scene. As the numbers of men of color participating in various leather events increases, the organizers felt the need to form a group that would support and promote inclusion within the leather community-at-large. The first event was a trip to the Mid-Atlantic Leather Weekend, hosted by The Centaur MC in Washington, DC, over the MLK holiday weekend. Needless to say, a good time was had by all. To contact, request membership information or to be added to the mailing list for invites write: ONYX, 1340 W. Irving Park Rd., #188, Chicago, IL 60613.

Ministers Interviewed on Gay and Lesbian Life

Atlanta—The American Friends Service Committee has recently published the results of interviews of 43 local clergy from a Listening Project. The surveys show that views on the acceptability and reasons for homosexuality vary greatly. One third expressed attitudes that persons of different sexual orientations should be accepted and welcomed. "Homosexuality is a unique gift to the Christian community." More than a third thought gays and lesbians should be welcomed, but that homosexual behavior should not. "Judgment is God's, not ours." Less than a third emphasized the sinful nature of homosexuality and their inability to accept unrepentant homosexuals. "I would feel the same about them as I would about a child molester. I wouldn't want them in my church." The summary report of the project, which is not a scientific survey but does represent a broad cross section of the religious community, is available upon request. (404)-586-0460



People of the world who will "Listen, Think and Act" at this year's PRIDE rally include Keith Boykin,(pictured), Coretta Scott King, and Rev. C.T. Vivian. Sunday June 30 at 1 p.m. in Piedmont Park.

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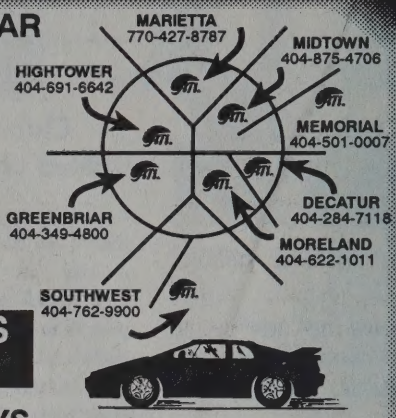

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Benita and Lolethia Got Married...

A Lesbian Bride's Story

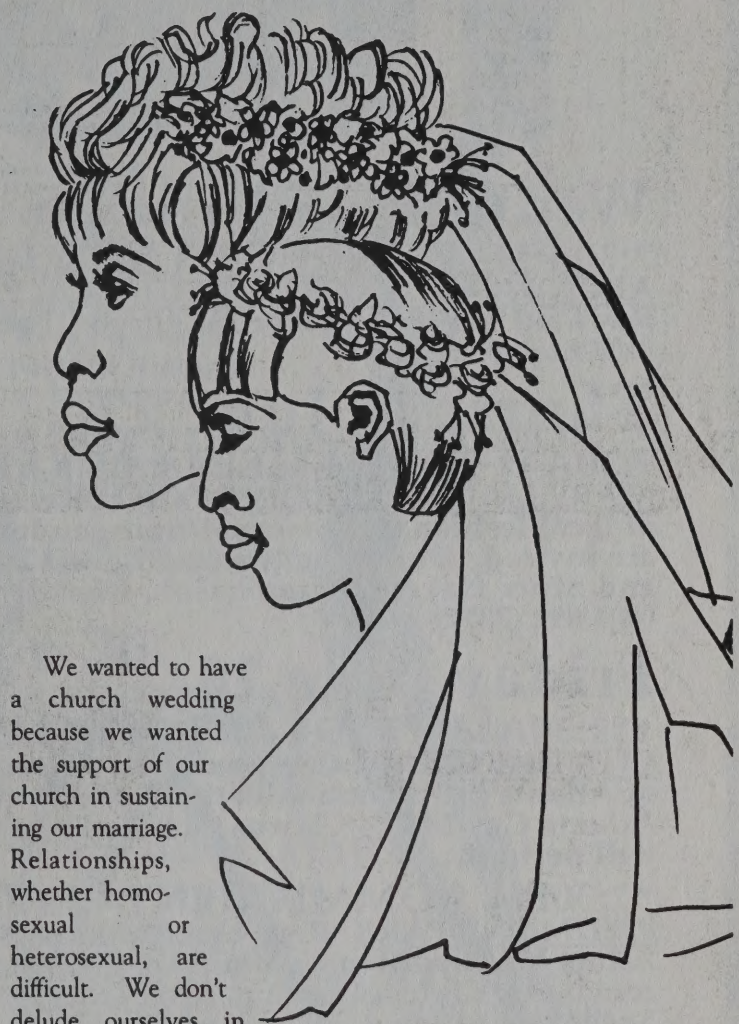
Nearly one year ago, on July 1,1995, Lolethia Annise Chapman and Benita Fern McShan were joined in marriage. That one statement seems to elicit an auto-recoil response in a lot of people.

"Two women can't get married." "It's not legal." "Its not right." "You don't have to do that!" Hearing comments along those lines wasn't surprising to me. Hearing them from gay men and lesbians was.

We live in a day and age where no one has to get married. With the help of science, virgins can give birth and the children of the unmarried can be legitimized at the court house. No law prevents a couple from taking whatever joint name they wish and their property can be shared and be held to our promises even if there is no legal marriage. No, we didn't have to get married. We wanted to.

My bride and I didn't just sit down one day and decide to get married. The decision was more of a realization that each of us had found in the other the answer to a life time of prayers. The decision to marry was a manifestation of our spiritual and personal growth.

The decision was not difficult. Fulfilling it was. We wanted to have a wedding because, in its purest form, a wedding is a public declaration before God and the world of the committed relationship between two individuals.



We wanted to have a church wedding because we wanted the support of our church in sustaining our marriage. Relationships, whether homosexual or heterosexual, are difficult. We don't delude ourselves in thinking that we will always be able to handle this relationship thing by ourselves. We agreed to a prenuptial interview and counseling as part of our planning for the ceremony.

The day our fathers walked us down the aisle was the ultimate coming out experience for them and us. By our marriage we announced our intention to live together as one, forever. We announced our joy, our pride and our faith in the future. Our fathers announced that they loved their daughters.

We do not consider ourselves, the traditional, stereotypical Ozzie and Harriet couple, nor do we see our selves as symbols or martyrs of gay consciousness. I did not officially come out to most of my family members until I

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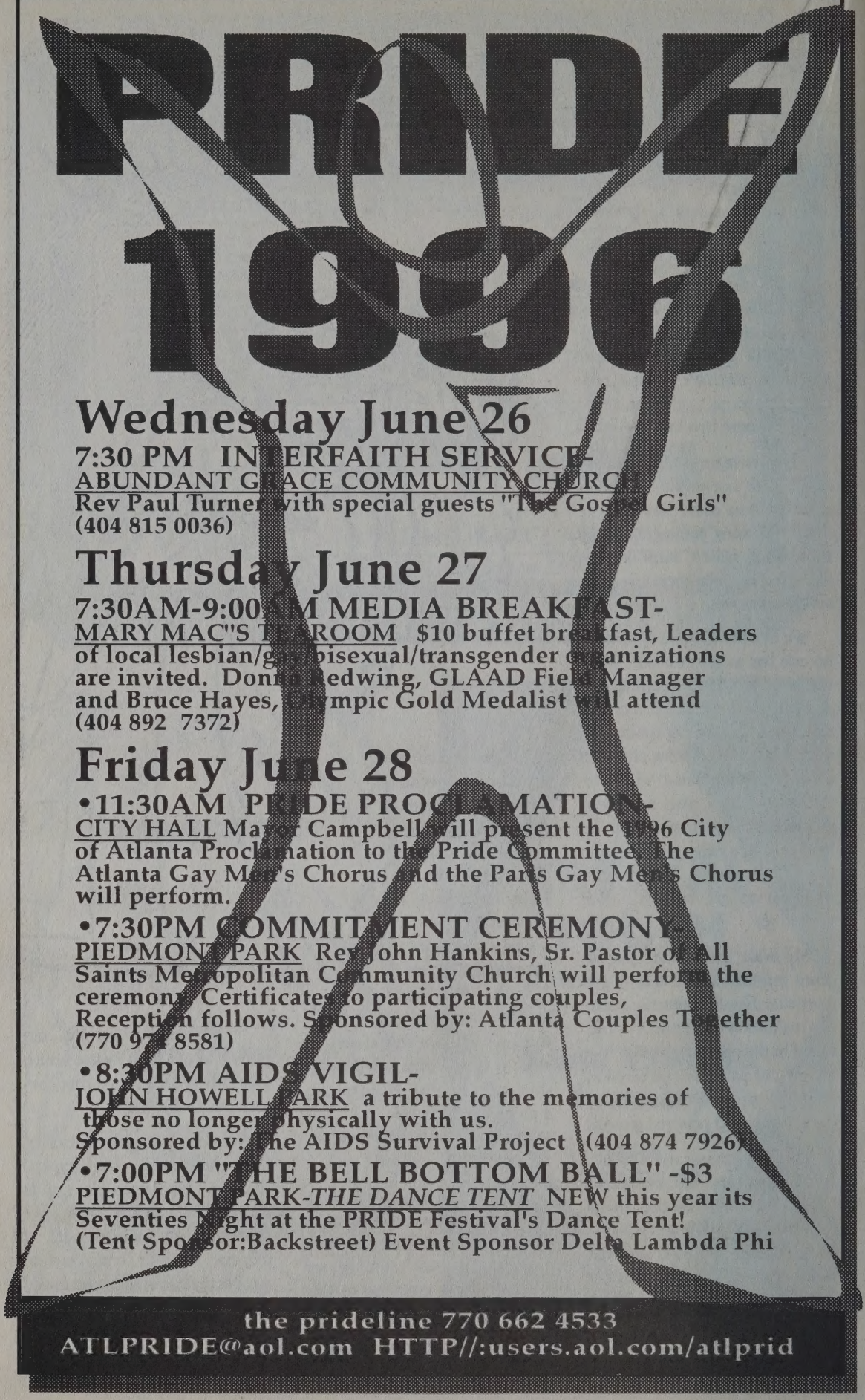

Wednesday June 26

7:30 PM INTERFAITH SERVICE-
ABUNDANT GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH
Rev Paul Turner with special guests "The Gospel Girls"
(404 815 0036)

Thursday June 27

7:30AM-9:00AM MEDIA BREAKFAST-
MARY MAC"S TEAROOM $10 buffet breakfast, Leaders of local lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender organizations are invited. Donna Redwing, GLAAD Field Manager and Bruce Hayes, Olympic Gold Medalist will attend
(404 892 7372)

Friday June 28

•11:30AM PRIDE PROCLAMATION-
CITY HALL Mayor Campbell will present the 1996 City of Atlanta Proclamation to the Pride Committee. The Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus and the Paris Gay Men's Chorus will perform.

•7:30PM COMMITMENT CEREMONY-
PIEDMONT PARK Rev John Hankins, Sr. Pastor of All Saints Metropolitan Community Church will perform the ceremony. Certificates to participating couples, Reception follows. Sponsored by: Atlanta Couples Together
(770 971 8581)

•8:30PM AIDS VIGIL-
JOHN HOWELL PARK a tribute to the memories of those no longer physically with us.
Sponsored by: The AIDS Survival Project (404 874 7926)

•7:00PM "THE BELL BOTTOM BALL" -$3
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Saturday June 29

•8:00AM PRIDE RUN/WALK-
GRANT PARK $12 by June 7th $15 thereafter.
Applications at Phidippides and Southern Voice.
Proceeds benefit The Lesbian and Gay Funding Initiative.
Sponsored by: Front Runners (770 623 5007)

•8:30AM HOTLANTA Volleyball Tournament-
PIEDMONT PARK top of the hill by 10th street,
4 person/double elimination, A+, A, and B. $40 Team
Sponsored by: Hotlanta Volleyball
(404 371 9957)

•10:00AM FAMILY REUNION 6

•Pride Market Opens-
PIEDMONT PARK join The 1996 Pride Festival's morning program especially geared for children . Clowns, face painting, Children Theatre! Entertainment on the Pride stage begins at 10 Am & continues until 10 PM. The Pride Market has over 250 booths representing, local and national artists action organizations, political candidates, and many service groups.
Come Out! and Become Involved!

•8:00PM "The Gay Men's Chorus-CONCERT
THE ATLANTA CIVIC CENTER, The Annual Pride Concert with special guests, The French Gay Men's Chorus, $25 admission.
Sponsored by: the Gay Men's Chorus (4304 876 5372)

Sunday June 30

•12:00 NOON The PRIDE MARCH-
CIVIC CENTER MARTA STATION Assembly starts at 10:30. The numbers Count so come and March with your favorite group!...There will be over 30 Floats and 50 Organizations to March with....
People of the World: LISTEN, THINK ,ACT!

•10:00AM Pride Market Opens

•1PM-4PM The PRIDE RALLY-
PIEDMONT PARK-THE PRIDE STAGE Join the expected crowd of over 200,000 and Listen to our fatted entertainment' "The Indigo Girls", Keynote speakers include, Coretta Scott King. Sean Sasser, Rev CT Vivian, Rev Mel White, Keith O Boykin, Dawn Averitt Doherty, Mike Nelso, Nancy Rodriguez

•7PM The STARLIGHT CABARET-

A Memorial to Amber Richards
PIEDMONT PARK-THE PRIDE STAGE , The South's most glamorous entertainers perform for you well into the night! Bring a picnic dinner some candles and enjoy this evenings tribute to a true Atlanta heroine! ....Following the show The PRIDE FIREWORKS display, closes out this years Festival.

The Atlanta Pride Committee Inc. is nonprofit organization and contributions made to it may be tax deductible

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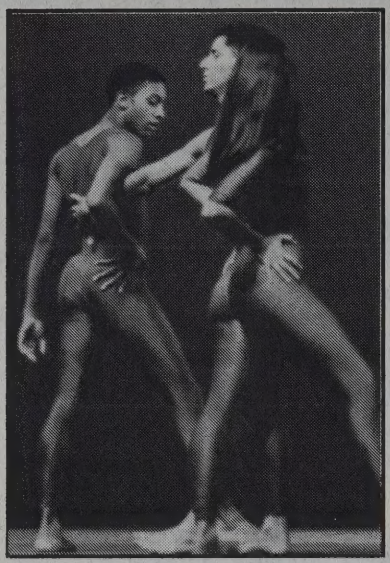

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EMPLOYMENT

Georgia Equality Project (GEP), a statewide political group working for equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people, seeks a dynamic, experienced Executive Director to assist the Board of Directors in leading the organization. Applicants need proven track record in state politics, fundraising, and grassroots organizing. The position is based in Atlanta and requires statewide travel. If interested, request application from GEP Search, 302 Steppingstone Court, Statesboro, GA 30458. GEP is an equal opportunity employer.

GOOD SEX! Now that we have your attention!, **Office manager needed** for growing business. Flexible hours! Must be MAC literate, ClarisWorks, Quicken, LOTUS 123. Good Income. 404-622-8069. **Telemarketing/Appointment Setter**- Loads of Hot leads make it easy to make great money!! Call 404-622-8069.

OUTREACH Workers needed to provide education at Gay night spots. Work late evenings and weekends. Must be dependable and dedicated. Great pay! PLWAs preferred. AESM 404-753-2900

Massage Therapist Needed for alternative service. Call 742-5596.

Volunteer Coordinator position now available. Can you recruit others for the cause? Do you have typing and computer skills? Do you like working with people? Then this is the job for you! Fax resume ASAP to AESM @404-752-9610

Female Illusionist needed to promote HIV/AIDS awareness in the African-American gay community. Will train, flexible hours. We Need You! Call AESM 404-753-2900

SEMINARS

Gay Men's Seminars on spirituality, sexuality and self-awareness. First Friday evening of each month. Facilitated by Franklin Abbott, LCSW and Stacey Blake, LMSW 404-874-8294, Ext. 1.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers needed for Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Visitor's Center. From May 15-Sept. 1. Call 770-677-9883 for volunteer application or pick up at Charis or Outwrite.

HIV PLANNING COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP. Persons interested in membership on the Metropolitan Atlanta HIV Health Services Planning Council should contact the office of the Chairman of Fulton County Board of Commissioners at 404-730-0191 prior to August 15, 1996.

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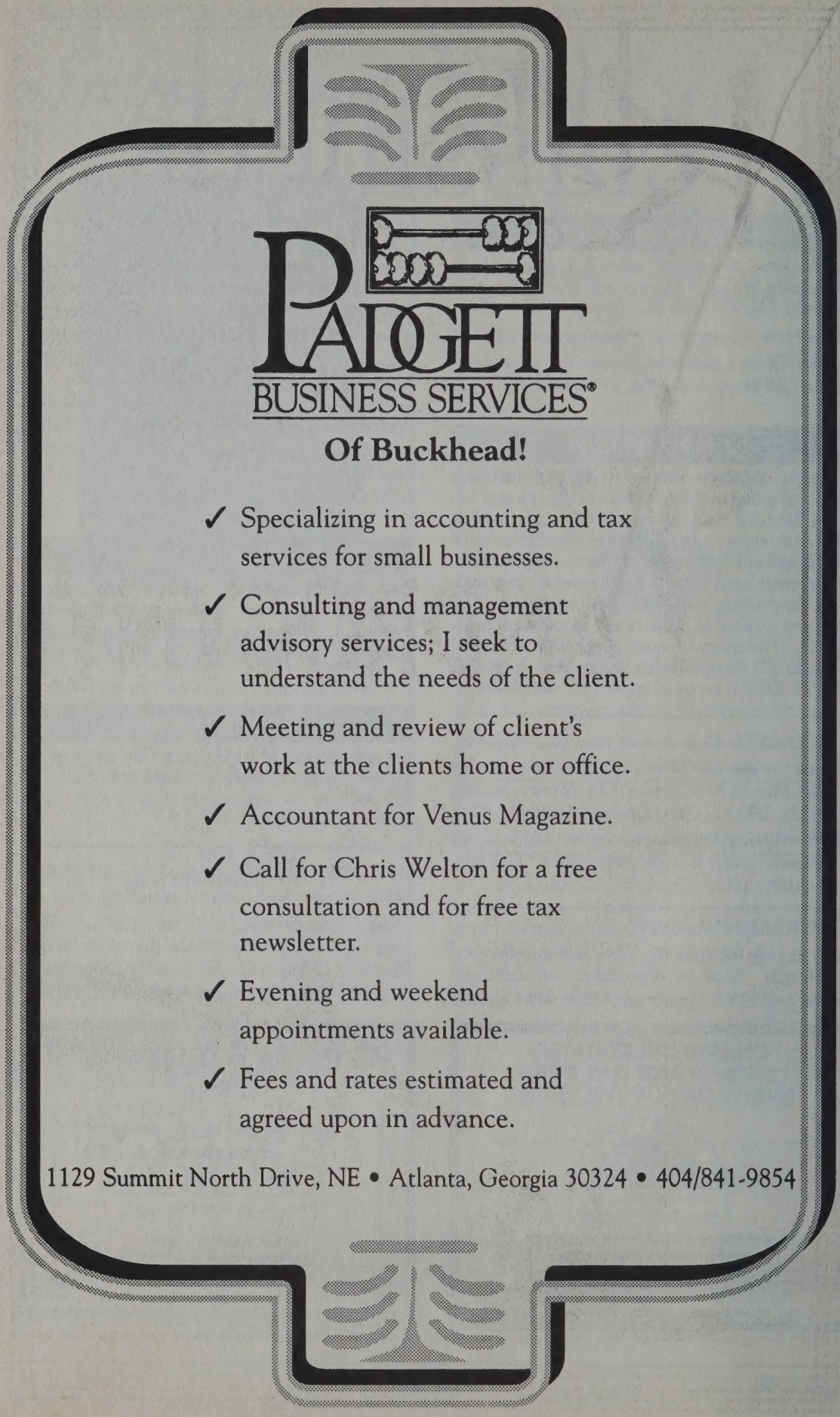
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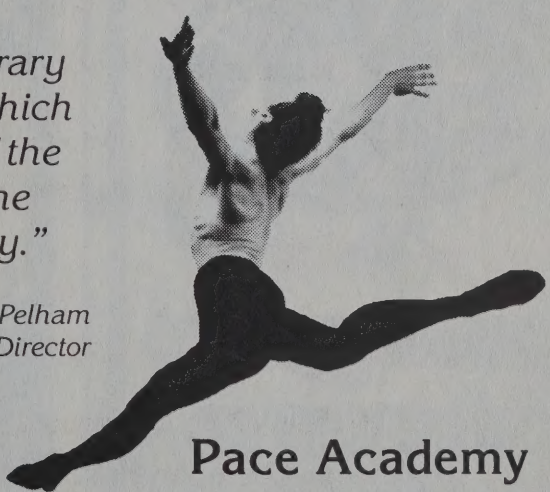

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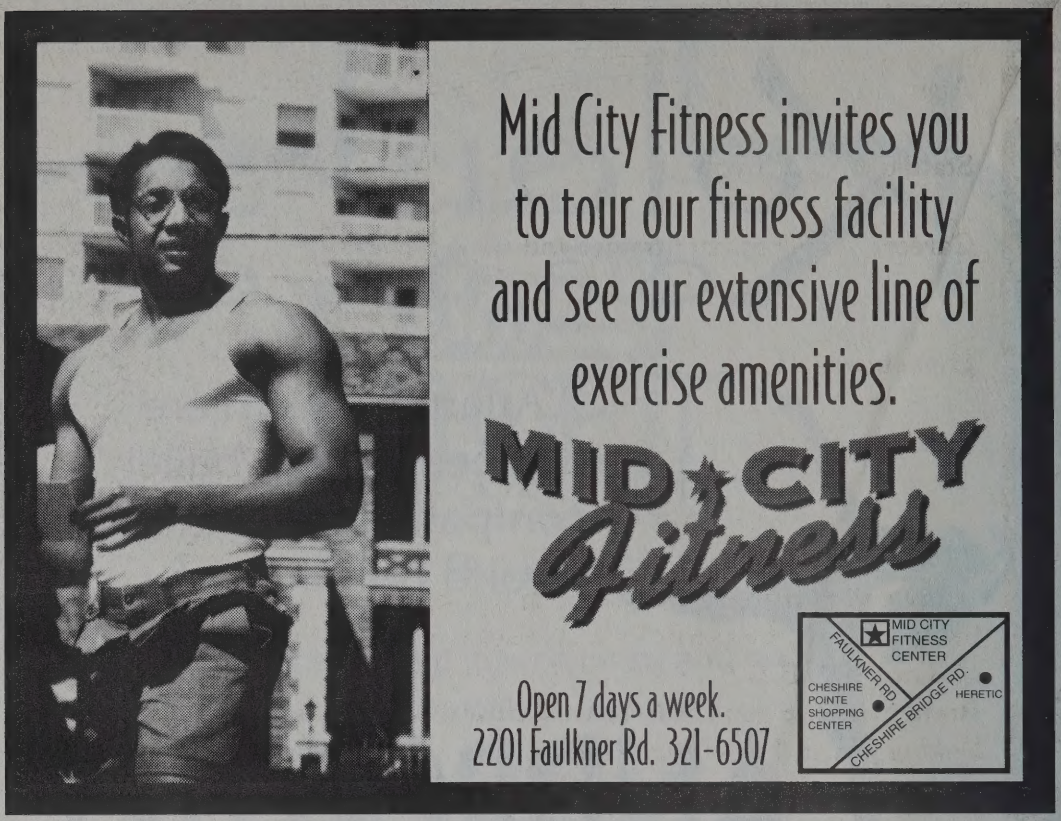
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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name:. . . . . Jay Buxton

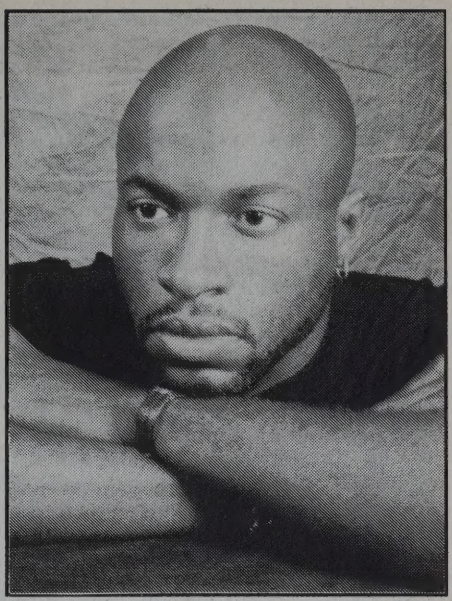
Age: 28

Status: . . . . . 'Involved'

Career: . . . . . personal trainer and counselor

Hometown: . Gary, Indiana

Latest Book:. "Give Me a Cool Drink of Water Fore I Die" by Maya Angelo



Jay enjoys traveling, listening to jazz and playing bid whist! Currently living in L.A., he works as a counselor for the NBGLLF. As co-founder of Black S.A.B.L.E., a production company who's aim is to promote and strengthen the bond between Black lesbians and black gay men, Jay is looking forward to seeing "black sisters and brothers loving one another".

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Ask Marian

New York Advice columnist, Marian Farrah, has joined the Venus Family!! From London to Trinidad, from Canada to Detroit, Marian has lived, seen and heard it all! So when you have questions about relationships, whether they be about love, friendship, family, coming out, your job, sex or the lack of sex, just do what we do...Ask Marian!

Dear Marian,

I am a 28 year-old man living in Alabama. I just broke up with my lover after 2 years. I feel so depressed, and so alone. My friends tell me to move on and find someone else, but I don't feel like I can trust anyone ever again. How do I move this feeling?

Dear Lonely,

What you are feeling is very important. Your feelings are telling you that you were hurt and need healing. This is a good time to get to know yourself better. Ask yourself what do you want from life? What are the things that are most important to you? Make a list, check it twice then pin it up on your wall. Make sure you can trust yourself to listen to what you want. When you do that no one can ever leave you feeling so empty again. You will be full of the life that you are creating for yourself!

Dear Marian,

I want to know if there is something wrong with me. I have been living with this woman for four years but we never seem to have sex anymore. I don't know whether or not I am a lesbian. Is this what it's supposed to be like?

Dear Need-some,

NO! NO! NO! If you are feeling like something is wrong, then something probably is wrong. It' s very clear that you are not having your sexual needs met. The real question is what else do you need that you are not getting in this relationship? Think about it. If you are worried enough to write to me, you need to tell her how you feel. Remember that it is important to fulfill your life in a way that makes YOU feel real.

If you have a question for Marian just drop her a line at: E-mail: Venusmag1@aol.com or write ASK MARIAN-VENUS MAGAZINE P.O. Box 89238 Atlanta, GA 30312

A Lesbian Bride

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

was ready to post wedding invitations.

Both of our families surprised us with their showing of love and support. My wedding taught me that much of the animosity and condemnation I had learned to expect from the world was of my own creation. Alternately, I projected condemnation outward, and in turn, made response to my own projections. For many years I separated myself from a loving family because I was not able to love and accept myself in the way that they showed me they did.

Not every one will understand or support us in our decision to marry. Those people are entitled to their opinions. Mostly, we've received acknowledgment and respect from those we have allowed to share in our lives.

If you live with, sleep with, and love someone, and the only reference you have for that person is "my lover" or "my friend" with your own words you have not dignified or acknowledged the relationship.

People understand what you mean when you say this is "my wife" or "my husband." These are not code words. People do not walk up to anyone and say negative things about his or her husband or wife. Our marriage and our families will get no respect until we hold them in honor and salute them in respect.

I chose to acknowledge my love. In doing so, I affirmed what many people and the media ignore about us. We gay and lesbian people have families and pride, and concern for the community, ambition, and a spiritual capacity that allows us to host the spectrum of human attributes that contribute to our being real people and citizens of the planet. We have the ability to love and to make commitments.

By jumping the broom at the end of the ceremony we acknowledged both our lesbian and African heritage. Those students of history will recall that once upon a time in America it was illegal for Negroes to marry. We were, the law declared, unfit and due to our subhuman and immoral natures incapable of committing the bond of holy matrimony. Lolethia and I, as legacies of those slaves who claimed their human right to choose their own life partners, claim our right to do the same.

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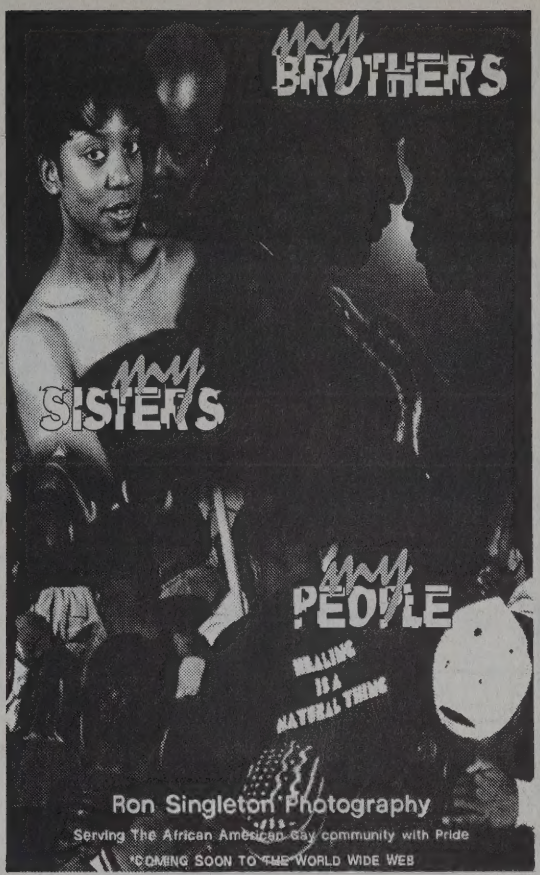
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Starscopes

by Dada

Happy Birthday Gemini! (May 21-June 20)

Look closely at a relationship to see if it offers compatibility, respect and mutual reciprocation. Major changes are on the horizons, possibly one of residence. Important decisions are better left until after the 21st of the month, when clarity is sharper and temperaments are milder. Scorpio, Aquarius, and Libra play important roles.

Cancer (June 21- July 22)

Increased ambition and professional responsibilities have you on a never-ending treadmill. Others are willing to provide the support you need to attain your goals. A Pisces is particularly sympathetic.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

You may find yourself being called to counsel, mediate, or just lend a listening ear. Use leadership abilities to settle a dispute. Harmony and teamwork are the key.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

An urge to splurge may set you back a pretty penny. Remain focused on a budget. Choose to express feelings through a creative medium such as writing, music, or photography.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Management and organization featured. Delegate extra authority to others and relax A trip to the country, or small party for friends, helps you unwind.

Scorpio (Oct. 23.-Nov. 21)

A reunion with someone from your past proves an unexpected surprise. View current affairs with a critical mind. Mix variety into daily routine.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Try to see another's point of view. Meet deadlines and keep commitments. Open communications eases misunderstanding.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Efforts at self improvement gives rise to a new you. Set time aside for inner reflection. Become involved in a community project.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Indulge in a hobby that is both fun and mentally challenging. Push forth ideas now, others are receptive. Success comes through personal initiative.

Pisces (Feb. 19-Mar. 20)

Highlights on family and real estate. Don't let petty annoyances hinder progress. Use intuition, follow through on hunches.

Aries(Mar. 21-April 19)

Desire for excitement keeps you on the go. Deal with concerns surrounding transportation. Take time to finish what is started.

Taurus(April 20-May 20)

Focus on revising financial revenue. Romantic opportunity may come with one of maturity. Selfish motivations can lead to loss. If you know your rising sign read that too..

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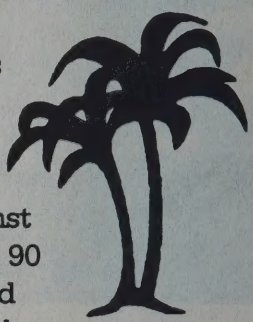
JUST SAY, "I DO!"

Hundreds of civil rights that come with marriage are about to be extended to same-gender couples by the courts of Hawaii. Yet political and religious extremists are politicking to crush this historic progress for gays and lesbians. Make a simple commitment to stand up against this bigotry. Take 90 seconds to defend our newfound rights and call to contribute today!



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$5.00/call, 18+

Each call makes an automatic contribution of $5.00. You may elect to contribute up to an additional $20. Your contribution will be added to your phone bill. Your contribution is not tax deductible.

Friends of Hawai'i Equal Rights Marriage Project

a nonprofit corporation assisting in education and advocacy defending legalization of same-gender marriage

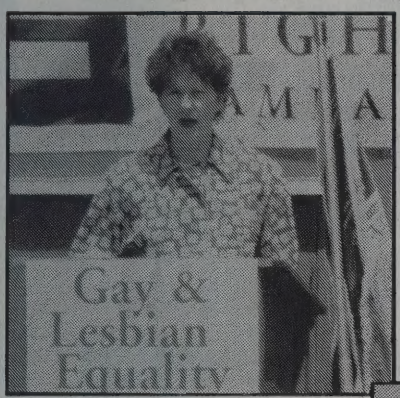
P.O. Box 11690 Honolulu, HI 96828

Have your friends and family call

Our campaign has been endorsed by these national organizations:

ASTREA NBGLLF
GLSTN NGLTF
HRC PFLAG

Oh, Happy Day!



HRC Board of Governors memer Laurey Demorest speaks at rally.

The U.S. Supreme Court acted in the true interest of justice by overturning Colorado's discriminatory Amendment 2, said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest national lesbian and gay political organization.

"This decision is an outstanding moral victory," Birch said after the court ruled 6-3 that the measure violates the constitutional guarantee of equal protection under the law. "And this triumph is especially important in light of the congressional gay-bashing, which has reached an all-time high in the last few weeks." Birch noted that this decision does not advance equal rights for gay and lesbian Americans. "It merely ensures that Colorado—and every other state—cannot pass laws to deny gay and lesbian Americans equal access to the democratic process," she said. "But it also makes clear that this Supreme Court will not permit any state to attempt to pass laws making its gay residents second-class citizens."

Birch said in a statement released after the decision, "The U.S. Supreme Court's stunning ruling in the Colorado Amendment 2 case is without question a reason for our communities to celebrate!! It is an undeniably hopeful sign that six members of the generally conservative court did not buy into the extremists' cant that we are seeking special rights, rather than the same basic civil rights that others take for granted."

Badili Jones and Sandy Lark at Ammendment 2 Rally.

"But the court's ruling is also a clarion call for gay men and lesbians—and our families—to redouble our efforts this election year, because if we don't muster our collective might to elect fair and reasonable people at every level of government, the religious political extremists will prevail."

"The court's decision is important to the future of gay and lesbian Americans because the six justices who ruled Amendment 2 unconstitutional indicated quite clearly that they are open to considering extending other protections to us, in the areas of employment, housing and public accommodations, for example. We must not squander that possibility. The more fair-minded people we can elect at the state and federal levels, the better are our chances of passing legislation that will extend us those basic protections. "

HRC's Don George proclaims victory

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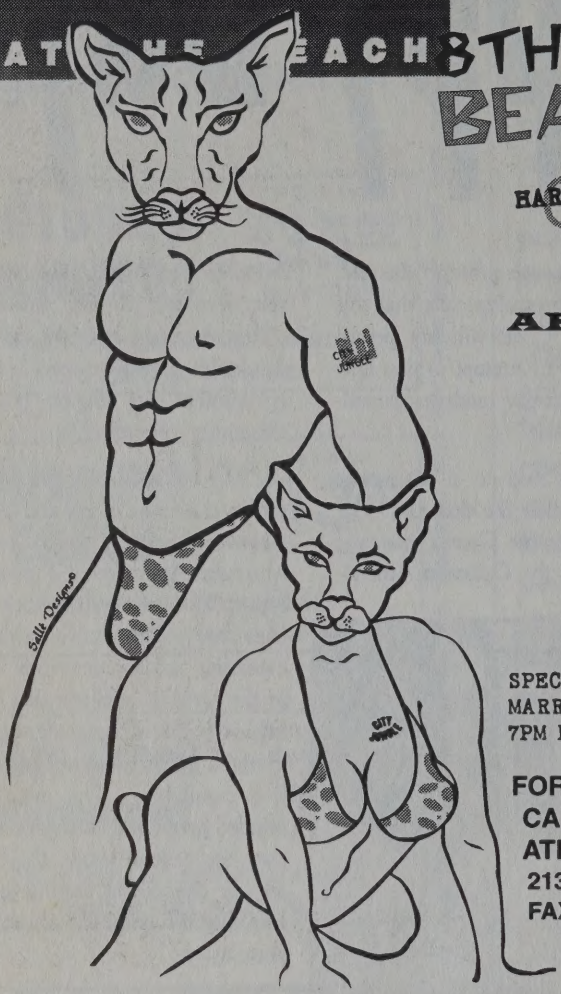

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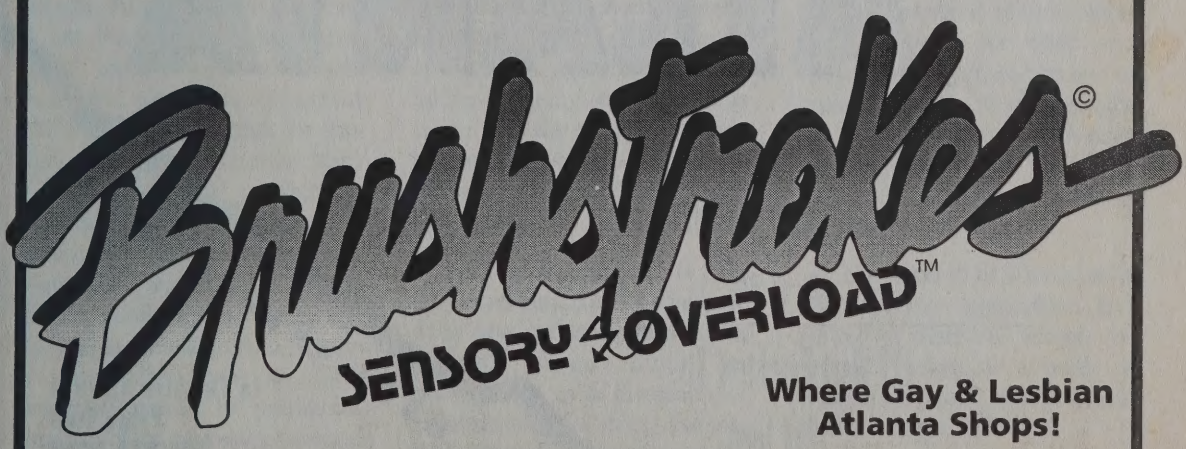

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The Hard Work Of *Inclusiveness*

Sharon J. Lane

In order to continue discussions on "Racism in the Gay and Lesbian Community" forum and to give the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus due credit for work we are trying to do to battle oppression, I am submitting this article to share my personal perspective with the greater community in an open discussion. I encourage others who are struggling with issues of white middle class domination of Gay and Lesbian organizations to respond.

As an African American Lesbian Feminist and a singing member of the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus for six of the past nine years, I am compelled to share my personal struggle with issues of oppression and exclusiveness that I've confronted as a result of singing with AFWC this season. At a time in my life when I am learning to fight against racial, sexual, homophobic, and economic oppression, some of my AFWC sisters asked that the chorus respect and honor their Christian religious convictions. "Let me raise my voice in song to praise my God," one African American woman said to me. When confronted with this cry for religious freedom for a religion I personally deem to have excluded me in its patriarchal imagery of the supreme power and its systematic exclusion and subservience of women over the centuries, I was taken aback.

I remembered the Africans who were brought to this country; stripped of language, culture, family and religion, who adopted Christianity and adapted it to serve our own spiritual needs and purposes. The words sung and spoken were similar to those of the "Euro-God" but the personal spiritual experience was fundamentally different. We African descendants sang the words of the so-called Negro Spirituals as we labored in the fields of our oppressors and communicated the details of the underground railroad schedule in code under the auspices of Christian worship. We saw our salvation, our "Black Jesus" as our strength and power which would "take us away from this place." I began to consider how proud and honored I would be to sing these songs and educate an audience, as I was, about the hidden meaning of much of this music and the seemingly subtle but actually poignant differences between "White Christ" and "Black Jesus."

And so the discussion of freedom of religion and the challenge as to how inclusive our feminist women's chorus could be, branched in to a discussion of racial diversity for some. For me, I asked myself if we were ready to embrace our diversities whether

racial, religious, sexual, or economic in nature. Employing the feminist process, the chorus body gathered for late nights and with much pain and loss of sleep. We chose to sing to the God of our Christian sisters as a gift to them. We chose to sponsor anti-racism workshops to begin to educate one another about cultural differences between our black and white and brown members and to begin to expose to the sunlight the insidious disease of racism, which is hidden from those who are born in to the cushioned comfort of white privilege.

I am proud to be a member of this evolving organization and wanted to share my struggle for personal growth as a result of being in this group of increasingly diverse women.

Join the National Black Arts Festival

on *Venus Night* at the Theatre!

Friday, July 5th, 1996

14th Street Playhouse

7 p.m. Zora Neal Hurston
8 p.m. Skin and Ornaments

Take Your Pick! Each Show $12.50

DANCE

Ronald K. Brown/ Evidence
$12, King Chapel, Morehouse
June 29th, 8 p.m.
June 30th, 3 p.m.

A Conversation with Katherine Dunham
July 1st, 7 p.m., $12, SCS Grand Ballroom C

Local Dance Companies
July 2nd, 8 p.m., $12, King Chapel, Morehouse

Blast From the Past & Deep Down Soul
July 3rd, 8 p.m., $12, King Chapel, Morehouse

Love Poems to God
$12, King Chapel, Morehouse
July 5th, 8 p.m.
July 6th, 3 p.m.

The Big Dance
July 6th, 9 p.m., $5 SCS Hotel

Sapphire is an African-American poet and writer and out-lesbian. Her work has appeared in nuerouse journals and anthologies. Call the NBAF hotline for an update on this performance location and time at 404/730-7315.

FILM

The Life and Work of Audre Lorde

Daughters of the Dust

The Third Eye of Zora Neal Hurston

The Lost Documentaries of Zora Neal Hurston

FOLK ART

NBAF Auburn Ave. Street Festival
June 29th–July 7th, Free, Auburn Ave.

LITERATURE

An Evening with Maya Angelou
June 29, 8 p.m., $18, Symphony Hall

Gwendolyn Brooks & Sweet Honey in the Rock
June 30, 7 p.m., $25, Symphony Hall

POETRY READINGS

Tom Dent, Mari Evans, Kalamau ya Salaam, Ruth Foreman, Angela Jackson, Felton Eaddy, Kamaria Muntu
July 1st, 8 p.m., $5, SCS Grand Ballroom C

Haki Madhubti, Kevin Powell, Sonia Sanchez, Ntozake Shange, Eugene Redmond, Robert Price, Pamela Plummer, Asha Bandele
July 2nd, 8 p.m., $5, SCS Grand Ballroom C

Thulani Davis, Amiri Baraka, Amina Baraka, Askia Touré, Jerry Ward, Alice Lovelace, Tony Medina, Jabari Asim, Andrea Wren
July 3rd, 8 p.m., $5, SCS Grand Ballroom C

VISUAL ARTS

NBAF Artists Market
June 28–July 7th, FREE, Greenbriar

National Juried Exhibition of African American Art
Georgia State University

"For the Love of Dolls" Doll Art Exhibition
Colony Square Mall

Bearing Witness: Contemporary African America Women
Museum of Fine Art, Spelman Coll.

Beyond Category: Musical Genius of Duke Ellington
Robert Woodruff Library

Looking at Ourselves: Mask/Face Identity
Africa House

Roland Freeman's "I've Known Rivers"
Auburn Avenue Research

THEATRE

Having Our Say
June 26th–July 6th, Alliance Theatre. All shows 8 p.m. except additional Matinee performances June 29th, 30th and July 5th at 2 p.m. and Matinee only July 6th at 3 p.m.

Jelly Roll! The Music and the Man
14th Street Playhouse. June 29th and 30th at 7 p.m. July 1st at 8 p.m. Matinee June 30th at 2 p.m.

Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill
14th Street Playhouse. June 29th–30th. Matinees at 3 p.m. Shows at 8 p.m.

A Huey P. Newton Story
14th Street Playhouse. July 1st & 2nd at 8 p.m. July 3rd and 4th at 3 p.m. July 5th at 10 p.m.

Skin and Ornaments
14th Street Playhouse. July 5th and 6th at 8 p.m.

Zora Neal Hurston
14th Street Playhouse. July 2nd and 3rd at 8 p.m. July 4th at 3 p.m. July 5th at 7 p.m.

MUSIC

Abbey Lincoln/Odetta
June 29th at 8 p.m. at the Rialto. $20

Dou-Dou 'Niaye and the Royal Drummers of Senegal and Drums of Fire with Mor Thiam
June 30, 8 p.m. Auburn Ave. Free

Black Rock Coalition
July 3rd at 8 p.m. at the Roxy. $15

Celia Cruz with Jose Albert "El Canario"
July 5th at Auburn Ave. Free

David Murray Big Band with Butch Morris
July 2nd at 9 p.m. Grand Ballroom C. $15

Ms. Maya Angelou is hailed as one of the great voices of contemporary literature and as a remarkable Renaissance woman. Being a poet, educator, historian, best-selling author, actress, playwright, civil-rights activist, producer and director, she continues to travel the world making appearances on college campuses, spreading her legendary wisodm. She has the unique ability to shatter the opaque preisms of race and class.

Louis Armstrong 4th of July Birthday Celebration with Ellis Marsalis Quintet and guest Nicholas Payton
July 4th. Auburn Ave. Free

Midnight Jams
June 28th – July 5th. 12 mid. SCS Hotel. $5

SPECIAL EVENTS

NBAF Opening Ceremony
June 28th, 7 p.m., King Chapel, Morehouse, Free

World Drummers for Peace
June 29th, 12 noon, Auburn Ave., Free

New York Pride

Sunday, June 30, 1996

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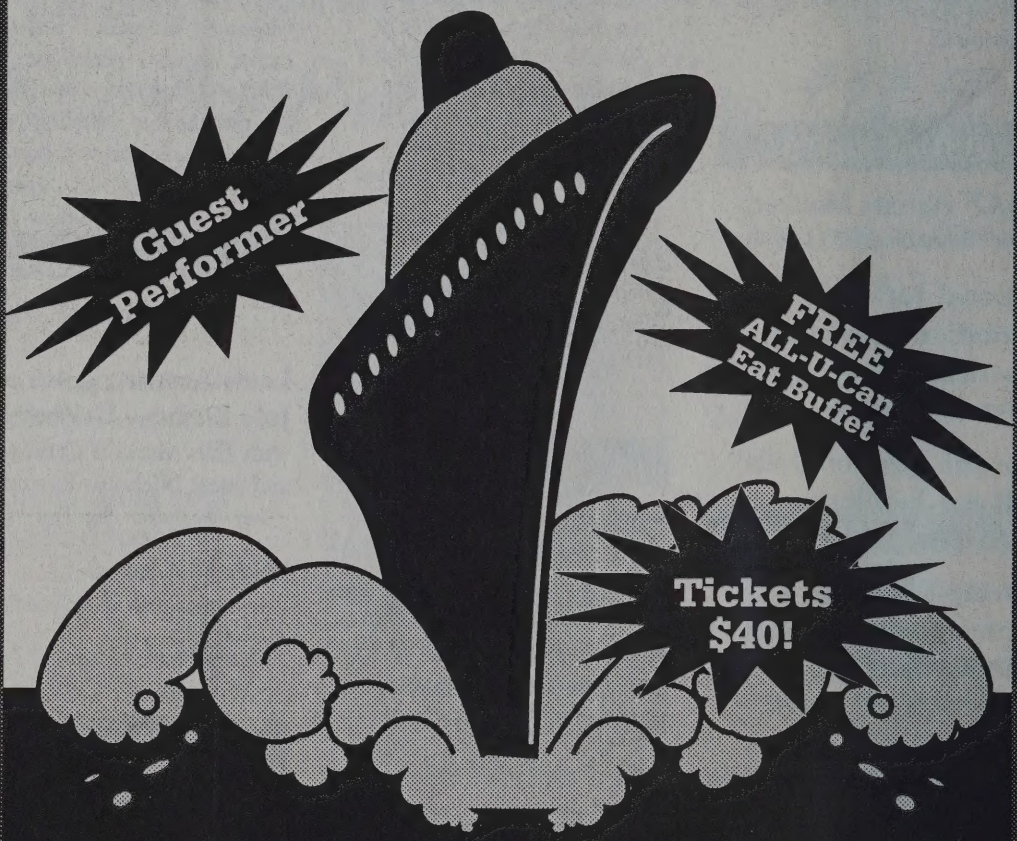
4th ANNUAL BOATRIDE

celebration



Pier: South Street Seaport, New York City

Boarding Time: 7:15 PM
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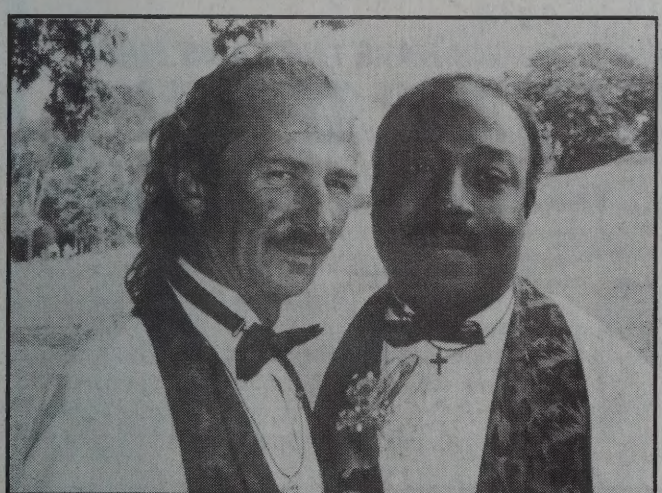
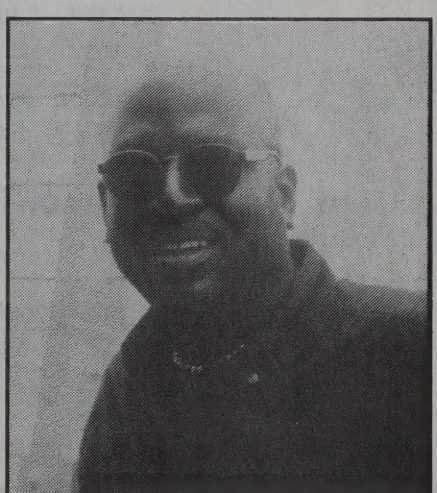
OUT & about

Wigwood 1996.

Lenora Rivers of NBGLLF and Troy Fernandes of AIDS Project Los Angeles.



Bernie Janesky (l) and Jerome Butts of Jonesboro on their wedding day at Piedmont Park.



L.A. photographer Ron Singleton.

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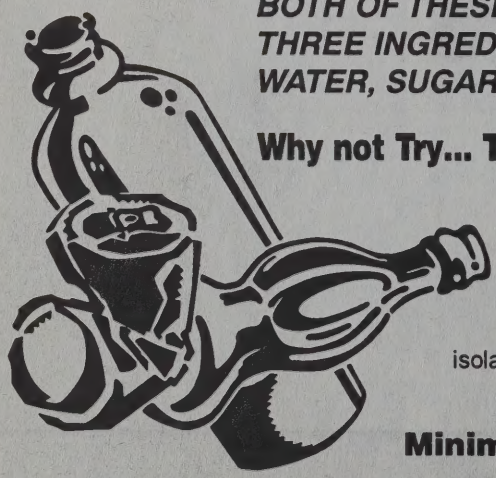

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Sunday	Full Truth Morning
Service	BBC Brunch
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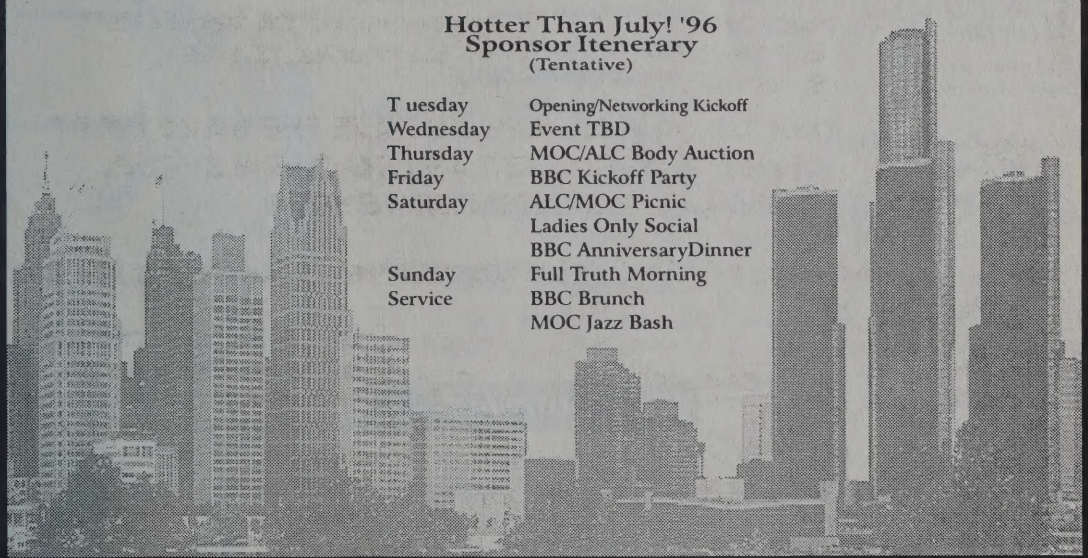

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ATLANTA

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404-872-4320

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404-662-4030

Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)
404-873-2002

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Human Rights Campaign,(HRC)
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Stonewall Bar Association
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em:trikatl@mindspring.com

ZAMI, Afr.-Amer.lesbians
404-370-1392

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Spelman College Lesbian Bisexual Alliance
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Bronx Lesbians United in Sisterhood (BLUeS)
212-330-9196

Las Buenas Amigas
212-868-78

Men of Color Against AIDS (MOCAA)
617-442-3800

Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE)
212-741-2247

South Asian Lesbian Gay Assoc. (SALGA)
212-294-2550; em salganyc@dorsai.org

Shades of Brown
212-439-1024

The Gay and Lesbian Center
208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011

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Women in the Life
202-667-8078

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Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays
312-871-2117

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Yahimba, lesbians
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The Ladies of a Current Affair
313-886-7180

Detroit Black Lesbian/Gay Pride
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Billionaires Boys Club
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KICK!, publication
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Shades of Ebony Connections
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The Men's Gathering, Dallas
214-521-5342

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Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum
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Pyramid Productions
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Queer Gays & Lesbians United (Q-GLU)
718-639-4951

TRES, parties for lesbians
718-670-3643

United Lesbians of African Heritage (ULOAH)
213-960-5051

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project
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WEB SITES

NBGLLF
(http://www.qrd.org/qrd/orgs/BGLLF)

RUPAUL'S HOUSE OF LOVE
(http://www.cyberdyne.com/~tpreddle/rupaul)

BLACKLIST-Who's Who in Black Gay community
(http://www.udel.edu/nero/lists/blacklist.html)

BLK MAGAZINE
(http://www.blk.com/blk)

BLACK STRIPE
(http://www.qrd.org/qrd/www/culture/black)

ATLANTA GAY and LESBIAN VISITOR'S CENTER
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NATIONAL EVENTS

JUNE 28-JULY 7, 1996
National Black Arts Festival. 404-730-7315

JUNE 28-30
Atlanta Pride Festival, Piedmont Park, PEOPLE OF COLOR FLOAT and march contingent info call 404-622-8069.

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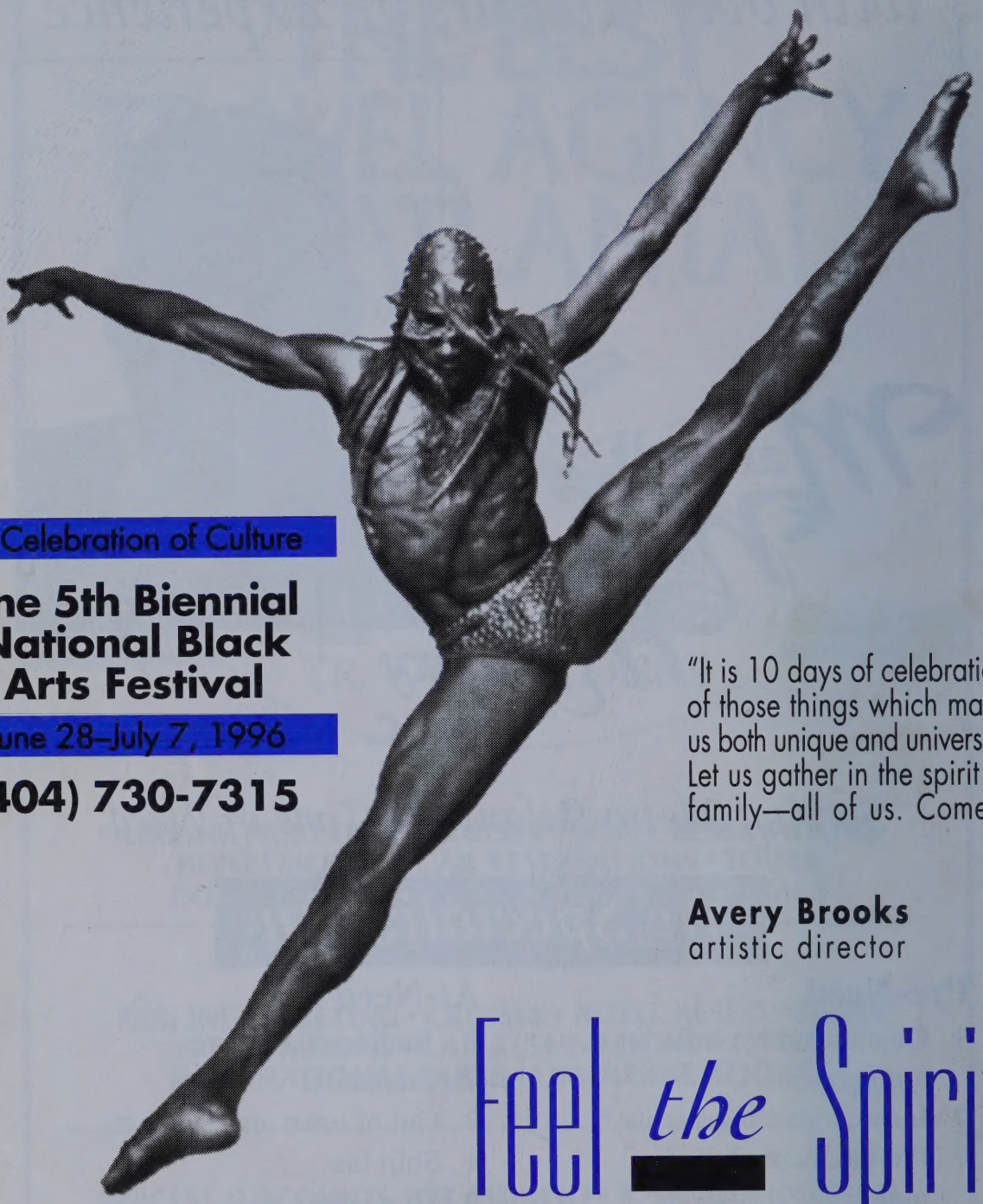

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Saturday	*August 31, 1996*	*Cultural Arts Festival*
Saturday	*August 31, 1996*	*Candlelight Vigil*
Saturday	*August 31, 1996*	*Venus Magazine sponsored Black Lesbian/Gay Ball*
Sunday	*September 1, 1996*	*Family Reunion Picnic*

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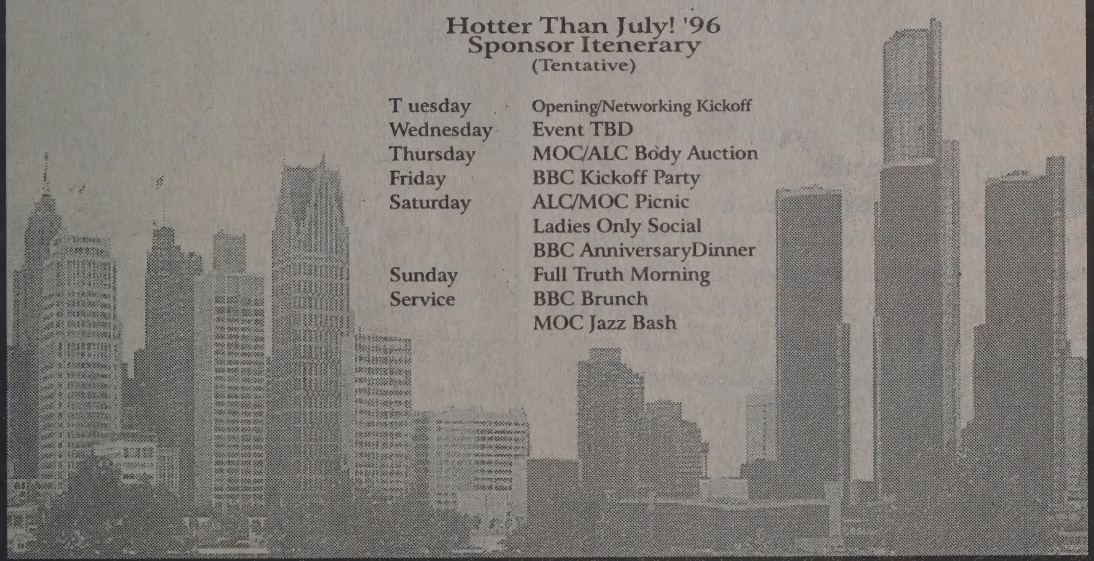

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LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR,

Hi, First of all I want to say how much I like your magazine. It is well designed and the presentation is wonderful. Keep up the good work.

I am a gay black male in Atlanta who is a dancer/choreographer. I worked with a performing arts group here in the city that does community service in our senior citizen community. It is so sad that here in Atlanta there is not a large representation of male dancers. The professional male dancers are in high demand and they are hard to find. I would like to approach gay organizations or the gay population in the city to say that I am willing to train men who are interested in learning how to dance. My group is contemporary modern base with jazz and West African influences. All of the dance forms are utilized. We are also interested in extending our outreach to all ethnic groups. I don't have any money to pay people, I step out each day on faith and perform for anyone who is accepting. You may contact me at 404-876-3708 for more information.

Peace,
Henry Hearns

DEAR EDITOR,

My partner and I moved from L.A. to Nashville,TN six months ago. The gay community is so very different here. Everyone is so closeted and uninvolved. This year's Pride celebration was attended by a whopping 900 people and when it began to rain the entire celebration was moved indoors to a local bar. We were getting severely depressed until someone sent us a copy of Venus. This is GREAT! Now we're considering moving to Atlanta!

PURPLE
Nashville

Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

July 1996
Vol. 2., No. 7

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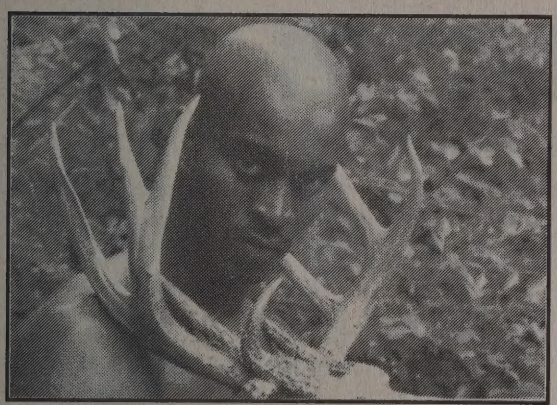
Contents

JULY 1996

THE BURNINGS:

Where Will These Fires Lead Us?

PAGE 29



Loving Our Uniqueness By Honoring Our Differences

PAGE 13

PLUS

My Body, My Temple ..... *Page 7*

Ask Marian! ..... *Page 9*

Hotter Than July ..... *Page 10*
Schedule of Events

Psychic Scars ..... *Page 40*
Poetry from Sabrina Sojourner

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From The Editor

Our churches are burning.

Last summer I attended our family reunion in Bradley, South Carolina. Many of the elderly members of my father's side of the family, the Cothrans, stills live in the same communities since 'freedom' came. As a matter of fact our family historian, Cousin Frances from New York, arranged for an afternoon trip to the 'BIG HOUSE' where we viewed the very grounds where our great-great grandparents survived and worked. The memories were still too fresh for many of my older aunts who refused to leave the bus.

We were greeted warmly by a woman and descendant of the slave owners. She lives in the house with her husband and children. Her maiden name is Cothran. The antique photographs on the walls of her great-great grandparents were all of Cothrans. I'm feeling strange right about now because none of those Cothrans look anything like me. Sensing my uneasiness, my uncle James explains that the freed slaves took the name Cothran with them indicating the 'benevolence' of their former masters. Cousin Frances added "that means everyone received a used pair of shoes once a year."

The next stop that afternoon was the Mt. Sinai AME Church built by freed slaves, the Cothran and Chiles families. The small wooden house of worship sits off the road with a long dusty unpaved drive. Each window holds beautifully stained glass, memorializing a founding member of the church. I can't describe the feeling that came over me just seeing their names and touching the glass, knowing they placed those windows with their own hands. And every wall was raised and every pew set by my father's father's father.

We all returned that Sunday morning to worship. Cousin Francis gave a thorough and very beautiful historic family speech and presented the church with a replica of a family tree inscribed on a piece of cloth by an elderly aunt who had passed on. I've never felt more alive than that day.

I can't image in my worst nightmare this church with our family's history burning to the ground.

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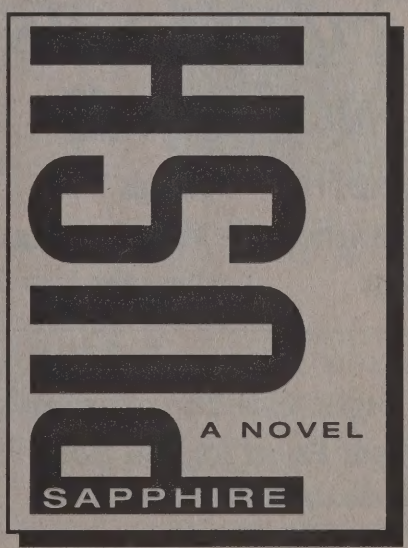

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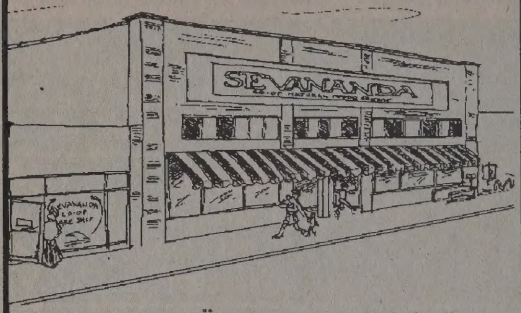

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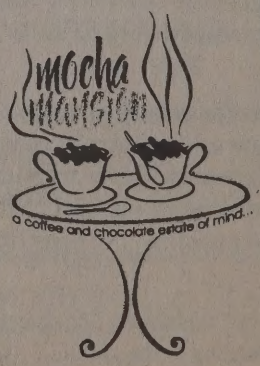

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My Body — My Temple

You can't fight racism, homophobia, sexism and other injustices with a belly ache. Okay, you can, but you'd think and feel much better by not putting so much junk in your body.

By Steven G. Fullwood

I'm a vegetarian, but I tell you it ain't been no easy road getting here. Sometimes I crave some sort of meat or sugar-based dessert or soda. During these times I gotta put something in my mouth (shut up!) or I'll go mad!

So instead I'll pick up a piece of fruit, or drink some water and think about how they slaughter animals, stick 'em in plastic packages. That takes care of it for me.

I recently relocated to Atlanta. I've dubbed it "The Pork Palace." When I'm at a restaurant, I have to interrogate the waiter about what contains pork, what doesn't, and then order my vegetable, pasta or rice dish. My buddy from New York says you gotta search for pig in Manhattan. Here, in the South, you just nod and the waiter drops squealing, hot pig on your plate!

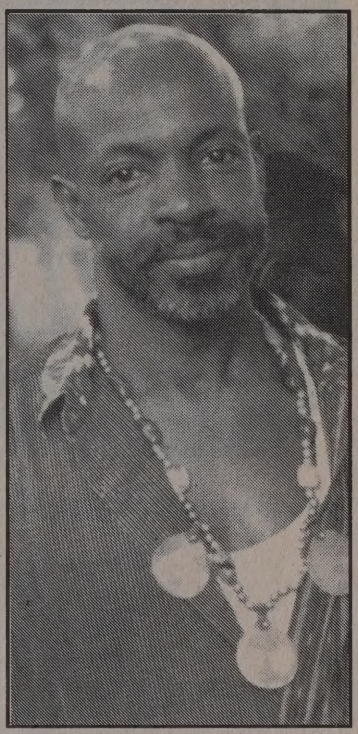
Now, don't get all offended cuz I'm putting down pork, and meat, in general. If you eat it, fine. I don't, and that's fine, too. I ain't trying to convince anyone to choose the lifestyle I'm pursuing. I'm just airing some concerns.

But ask yourself these questions. How is it you can find meat readily available in just about any corner store or restaurant of any central city neighborhood? Why do you have to search for fresh fruits and vegetables (or for that matter anything fresh) in those places? The way I see it, this is all by design. You can't fight racism, homophobia, sexism and other injustices with a belly ache. Okay, you can, but you'd think and feel much better by not putting so much junk in your body.

Why is there a disproportionate amount of black folk dying from hypertension, heart disease, are grossly overweight, have skin problems, suffer from stress, and plenty of other ailments too numerous to mention here? Medical research reveals WE EAT BAD! We eat Little Debbies, drink all kinds of soda (pop, for those from the Midwest), suck down meat and then complain about not being able to sleep, or stop the steady stream of mucus dripping from our noses.

Much of what bothers us physically, affects us mentally and spiritually. Remember, "thy body is a temple?" Well, some of us ain't even trying to keep the place clean. To me, it's a slap in the face to that which created you. It's like saying, "Oh what, this old thing? Got it from God. Don't know how it works. Pass me a Pepsi, would ya, sugar?"

Taking care of your body should be something you do for good health, not just cuz you wanna wear hoochie shorts (not that it stops many of us). Find out how your body works, what it needs, set goals and work to meet



those goals. Trust me. The better your diet, the better you'll feel about you.

Okay, so I am trying to convert you. Sue me. I like you enough to tell you about yourself. The revolution starts within. Get yourself together, and then you can get up and fight the good fight. Or else while everyone's out there swinging, you'll be sitting up in KFC getting heartburn.

Steven G. Fullwood, graduate student at Clark Atlanta University, writes part-time to tell you about yourself.

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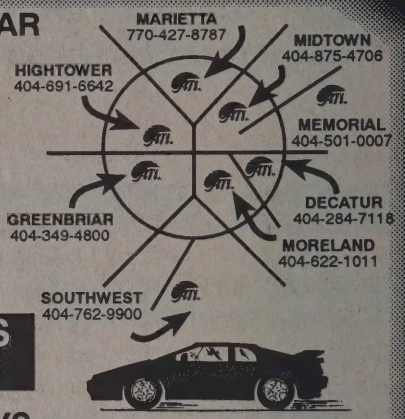

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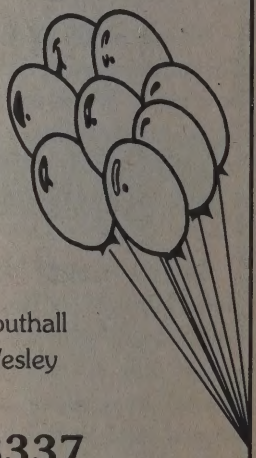

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Ask Marian

PHOTOGRAPHY: JENA P. JONES

New York Advice columnist, Marian Farrah, has joined the Venus Family!! From London to Trinidad, from Canada to Detroit, Marian has lived, seen and heard it all! So when you have questions about relationships, whether they be about love, friendship, family, coming out, your job, sex or the lack of sex, just do what we do...Ask Marian!

Dear Marian,

I am a 29 year-old African American Gay male who just found the man of my dreams. But there is a problem. He's still living with his ex-lover and is financially attached to him. I don't know if there's anything going on but it puts me on my "p's & q's" . He loves me and he wants to be with me. My question is should I wait?

Dear Waiting to Exhale,

The "man of your dreams" may not be able to handle money and has not put closure on his last relationship. As a result, the "man of your dreams" could create a nightmare for you - lack of trust for the man you love. A healthy dream partner would be one who is ready for a relationship without baggage from old ones. What led him to become "financially attached". Will he repeat this in your relationship? How good is he at setting boundaries in his life? Being loved and feeling wanted by him is not enough for you to have a healthy relationship with him. My question to you is what will you receive from this relationship if you wait?

If you have a question for Marian just drop her a line at: E-mail: Venusmag1@aol.com or write ASK MARIAN-VENUS MAGAZINE P.O. Box 89238 Atlanta, GA 30312

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Detroit's Black Gay Pride
POCKET GUIDE
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7-9 pm, Free
St. Matthew & Joseph Church
850 Woodward Ave.

Community Networking Social
9-11 pm, Free
Elmwood Grill
Woodward Ave.

Wednesday

Pride Poetry
Woodward Coffeehouse
Woodward Ave.

Thursday

Charity Body Auction
9pm-2am, Free
Clinton Street Restaurant

Friday

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6-9 pm
Full Truth Unity Church,
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Ladies Only Ice Breaker
8-10 pm, $5
Backstreet Nightclub
15606 Joy Road

BBC Anniversary
Kick-off Party
10pm-2am, $5
Backstreet Nightclub

Saturday

Picnic
10am-8pm
Palmer Park

Women Only Rap Session
6-9pm, Free
Full Truth Unity Church

BBC Anniversary Dinner
8pm-2am, $30, more at door
Renaissance Center
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Sunday

Sunday School
9am-9:45am
Full Truth Unity Church

Community Spiritual Service
11am-1pm
w/ Rev. S.F. Mahee
Full Truth Unity Church

BBC Anniversary Brunch
noon-4pm, $30, limited
Renaissance Center
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Jazz Bash
4-8pm, $5
Clinton Street Restaurant
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July 23rd thru July 28th
DETROIT '96

Pride Line 313.438.0704, ext.1

PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name:. . . . . June Washington

Age: . . . . . 40 something

Status: . . . . . married

Career: . . . . . HIV/AIDS counselor

Hometown: . Detroit, MI

Latest Book:. "Quiet Strength" by Rosa Parks

June is a founding member of Detroit's Ladies of a Current Affair, a social/political organization for lesbians of color. She is the first African-American in the country to co-chair an HRC event and is credited for the growing membership and attendance of blacks at Detroit's annual HRC dinners. June is also proud to be the only female member of The Billionaire's Boy's Club, an affluent social organization for gay men of color.

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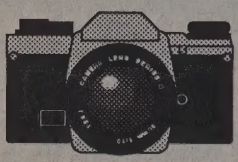

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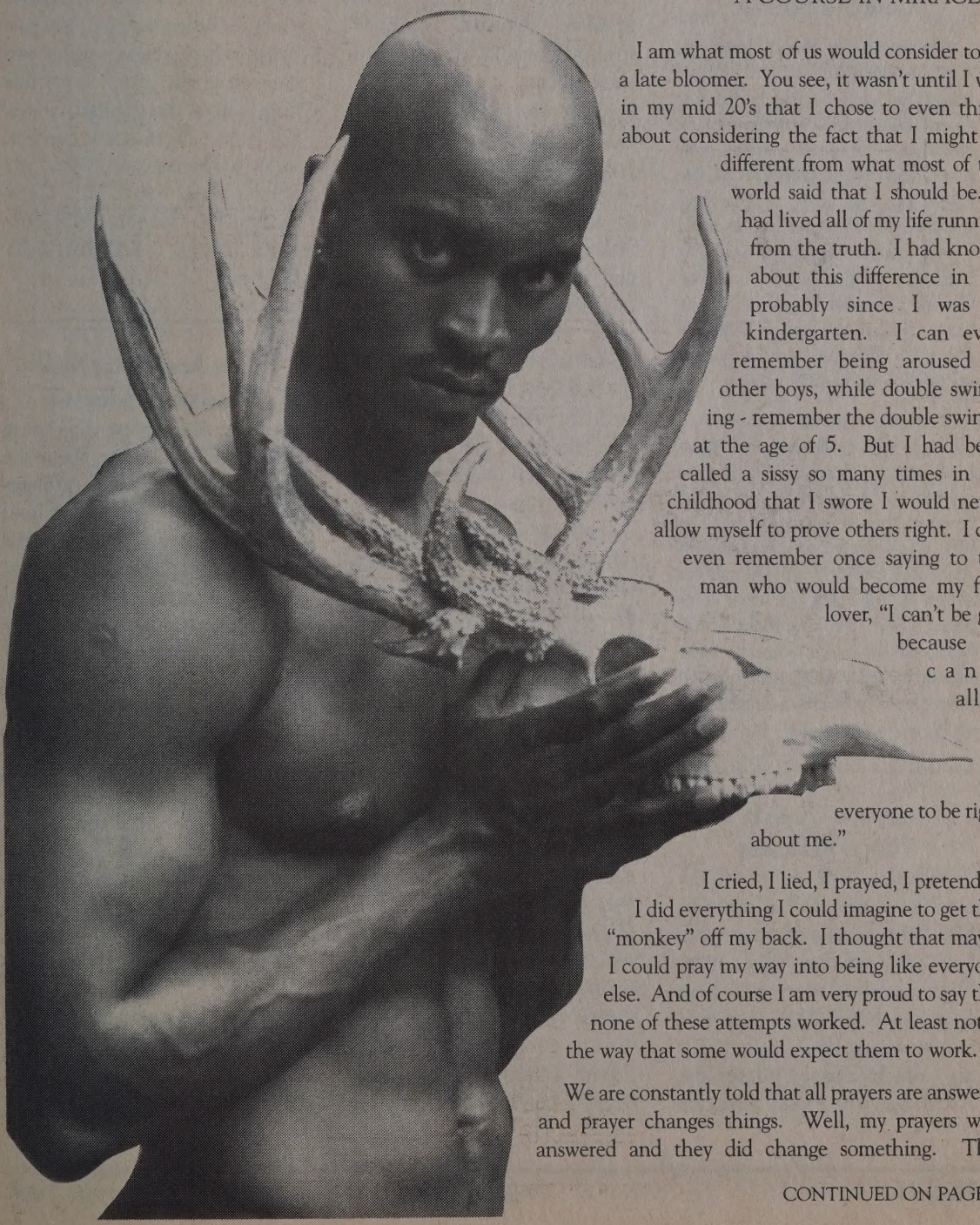
Loving Our Uniqueness By Honoring Our Differences

by Kamau Ifoma

"GOD is in everything I see because GOD is in my mind.

-A COURSE IN MIRACLES



I am what most of us would consider to be a late bloomer. You see, it wasn't until I was in my mid 20's that I chose to even think about considering the fact that I might be different from what most of the world said that I should be. I had lived all of my life running from the truth. I had known about this difference in me probably since I was in kindergarten. I can even remember being aroused by other boys, while double swinging - remember the double swing - at the age of 5. But I had been called a sissy so many times in my childhood that I swore I would never allow myself to prove others right. I can even remember once saying to the man who would become my first lover, "I can't be gay because I can't allow everyone to be right about me."

I cried, I lied, I prayed, I pretended. I did everything I could imagine to get that "monkey" off my back. I thought that maybe I could pray my way into being like everyone else. And of course I am very proud to say that none of these attempts worked. At least not in the way that some would expect them to work.

We are constantly told that all prayers are answered and prayer changes things. Well, my prayers were answered and they did change something. They

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

Vigil Held to Denounce Church Burnings

Atlanta—On Friday June 14, African-American Gay and Lesbian leaders held a vigil to denounce the recent burnings of Southern black churches. Over 50 people, both black and white gathered at the tomb of Dr. King. Speakers included Joan Garner of the Fund for Southern Communities; Pat Hussain of Southerner on New Ground ; Duncan Teague of Georgia State University ; Rev, S.F. Mahee of Unity Fellowship and Sandy Lark of the Atlanta Lambda Center.

GLAAD Atlanta also held an all-night vigil at the Virginia Highland Baptist Church. The Baptist church is gay-friendly and has received threats because of it. The vigil was arranged to coincide with the King Center Vigil. A call for action by the black and white combined gay communities has produced organized plans to raise money for the burned out churches. To get involved contact Southerners on New Ground at 404- 212- 9695.

Atlanta Lambda Center Relocates

Atlanta—The Atlanta Lambda Center will relocate to 828 West Peachtree Street, NE Suite 207, effective July 1, 1996. The Lambda Center will lease approximately 2,000 square feet on the second floor of the building, which already houses the AIDS Survival Project, Positive Impact, Atlanta GLAAD, and the AIDS Substance Abuse Speakers Network. Lambda's space will be built out to comprise three offices.

This move marks a major turning point in the Lambda Center's progress toward its ultimate goal: to secure a building large enough to accommodate the needs of Atlanta's gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered communities for office, events, and meeting space. In addition, the Youth-Pride Helpline will operate out of the Lambda Center in its new location. Plans are underway to offer the use of office equipment and mail-and-message services to community groups, as well.

For more information, contact Atlanta Lambda Center Board Co-Chairs David Herman (404-352-2050, ext 245) and Sandy Lark (404-876-4147).

Nationwide Study — Lesbians Who Parent

Julie A. Steeno, a licensed clinical social worker and Ph D. candidate is in the process of conducting a nationwide survey of lesbians who parent. Responding to the dearth of scientific data regarding the profile of lesbian headed households, the mothers themselves, and their day-to-day lives in service of their families, Steeno is looking for lesbians all over the country who fit into the category of "parent". It is her intent to conduct a descriptive study, including a sampling of participants from as many ethnic and socio-economic groups as possible from across the United States. For more information contact: Julie A. Steeno, LCSW, 1501 Venera Ave. Suite 212, Coral Gables, FL 33146 (305) 662-5000; email: FAMILYSTDY @aol.com

Book About Gay Male Atheletes Underway

A book is presently being researched and written about the experiences of gay male athletes and coaches at the high school and college levels. The author is looking for a broad range (geographic, sports, good and bad experiences) of people to interview; with complete anonymity/ confidentiality assured, if necessary. The book will be about the issues gay people face in sports: coming out, dealing with homophobia, dealing with stereotypes in both the gay and sports communities, as well as what makes each sport different or unique for gay people. If interested in being interviewed, please contact: Dan Woog, 301 Post Road East, Westport, CT 06880, tel.: 203-227-1755; email: naddy@ aol.com. The book is scheduled for publication in 1997 by Alyson Publications.

Loving Our Uniqueness

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

changed me. They changed the way that I perceived myself. For so long there was this voice inside of me very peacefully saying, "You're OK just as you are." But, at the time, who was I to believe. This crazy little voice inside of me or everyone in the world. At least that's the way that it seemed to me. I HATED being different.

to remind the community of his differences. Forcing them to forget his uniqueness. All Ed ever wanted was to be Loved.

Before moving to Atlanta I began studying and practicing the teaching of Buddhism. Members of my family and friends found this to be amusing and crazy. It was too "different" from the way a Black man in America should practice his Spirituality. What they don't recognize is that it was the teaching of Buddhism that began the process of Spiritually grounding me. It was my path,

Whatever the difference may be we all deserve the respect of Being. We are all woven from the same spool. Just in different textures and colors and consistencies.

I believe the only way that we will come together as a community is to allow and learn to accept others in the same way that we want to be accepted. No we don't have to agree with each other. That is an unrealistic expectation. Yet wouldn't it be wonderful if we could just learn to respect the uniqueness of each member in our own community. It is realistic to believe that we are capable of

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could just learn to respect the uniqueness of each member in our own community.

And yet the more that I paid attention to that little voice in me the more I realized that this was the answer to my prayer. I am OK, just as I am!

I thank GOD for constantly giving me the message from within. Yes, I eventually discovered happiness and peace in my being. What I later realized is that what the still, small voice was actually saying, and continues to say everyday, is that my difference is what makes me unique. Just as each snow flake has its own Divine pattern so does each of one us. Some may appear similar, grouped in similar categories, yet they all express a certain uniqueness.

Remember the movie "Edward Scissorhands"? Edward was an outcast basically because he was so very different from everyone else. As one lady taught the community to see his differences as a unique quality he became a local celebrity. He was removed from his celebrity status only when other forces worked even harder

for that moment. It gave me the courage and enlightenment to study all Spiritual teachings in the way that I do today. I may not be writing these articles if I had chosen to not follow my inner guide onto this particular path, if I had maintained my fear of being different.

Now, in order to honor your uniqueness we should remember that everyone on this earth has their own uniqueness. No matter how much their difference may conflict with your choices they should be respected just for Being. If they are "too feminine" or "too masculine," they deserve respect. If they are top, bottom or versatile, they deserve respect. If they are "militant" or "closeted" they deserve respect. If they are "too black" or "too red" or "too yellow" or "too white," "too wild" or "too reserved" they deserve respect. Whether they listen to rap, classical, jazz, rock, disco, club or blues; rich man, poor man, beggar-man, thief; doctor, lawyer, Afrikan chief; Christian, Jew, Islamic, Yuroba, Buddhist or Hindu.

realizing that we all desire the same thing. We all need to be Loved and Respected just for Being.

So if there is any message that I would like to give to anyone who continues to struggle with this, or any feelings of ostracism, it is "Honor your uniqueness. It is what makes you YOU." To the world I say "My difference is the expression of my uniqueness." To my community I say "Each one's uniqueness allows them to be a stronger thread in the fabric of life." Let's show ourselves and the world how beautiful this fabric actually is by honoring the unique beingness of everyone in our community. There is a song that says "what if GOD was one of us?" I say "what if GOD is all of us?" Then whom shall you criticize and whom shall you LOVE?

I CELEBRATE YOU! I CELEBRATE ME! I AM THANKFUL FOR ALL OF US. IT TAKES ALL OF US TO BE A UNI-VERSE, ONE SONG! GOD IS IN EVERYTHING THAT I SEE!

A Very Special Encounter at Lambda Apothecary

Sharon: It's so exciting that you two are pregnant! Having Jacob has made my life so full, so rewarding. I just love this Lesbian Baby Boom.

PHOTO: JEAN MATTESON

Queen: I've waited long enough. We decided to go for it and we are delirious. Right, honey?

Sonya: Sure are. We're also excited that Lambda Apothecary offers such a full range of products for women, pregnant or not...vitamin supplements, essential herbs, even breast pumps. An extensive perfumerie section and more makeup than you see at WigWood.

Sharon: I always feel comfortable coming here for any prescription. The staff is skilled in all kinds of healthcare advice and they are always eager to share. It's not like any other drug store I've ever seen. I mean, a couch? A TV? A fireplace? What does that tell you?

Queen: It tells me plenty about Lambda Apothecary, that they mean it when they say:

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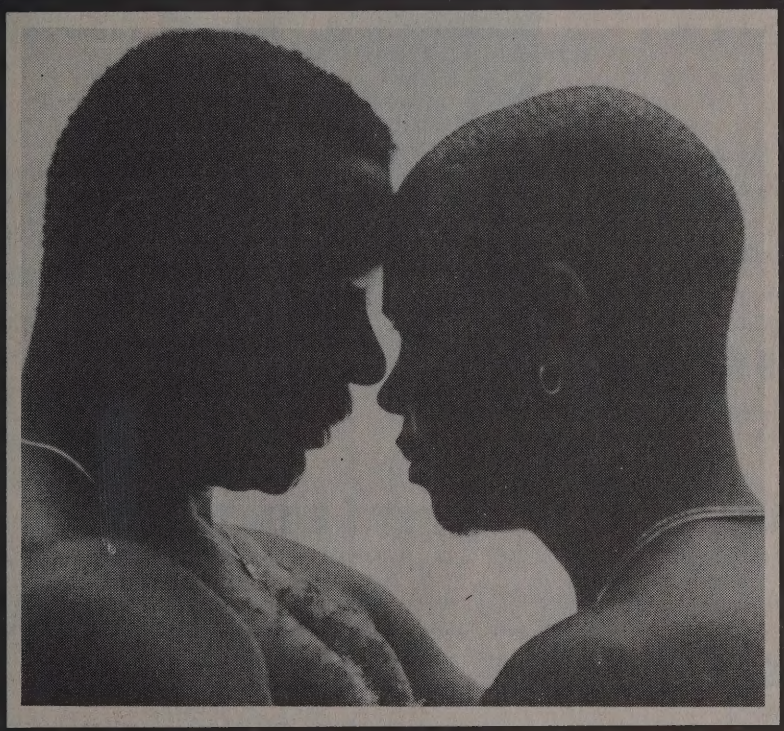

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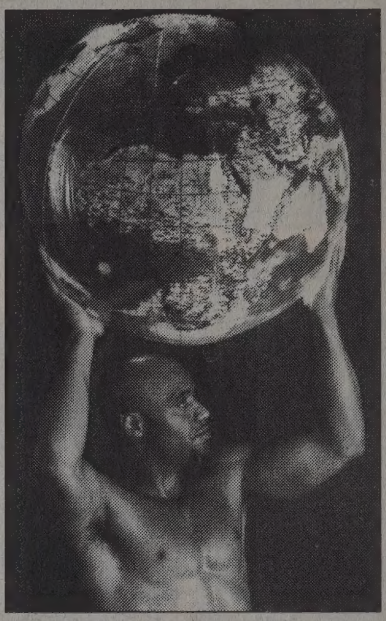

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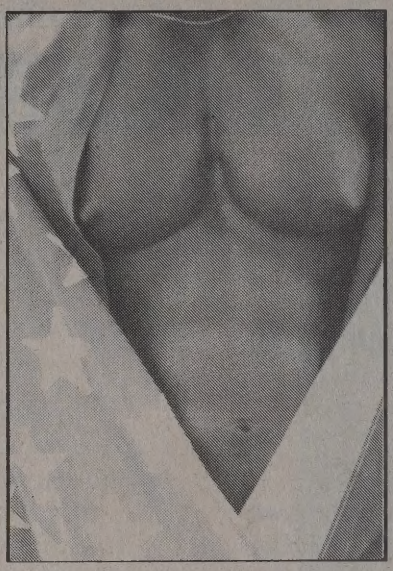

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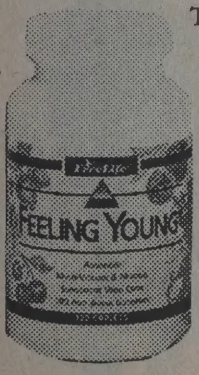

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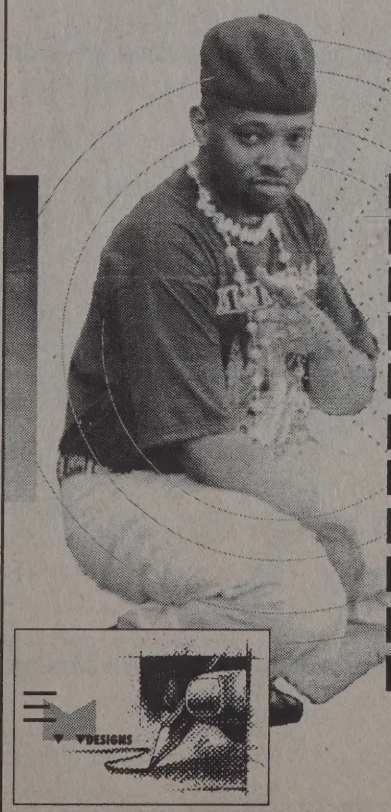

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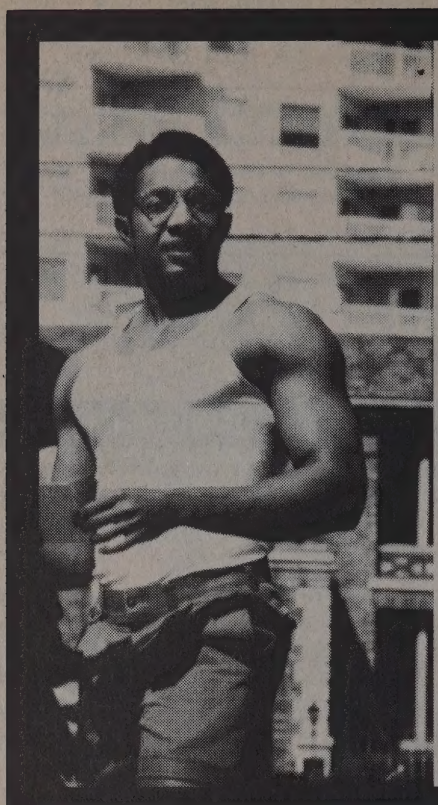

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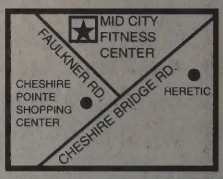

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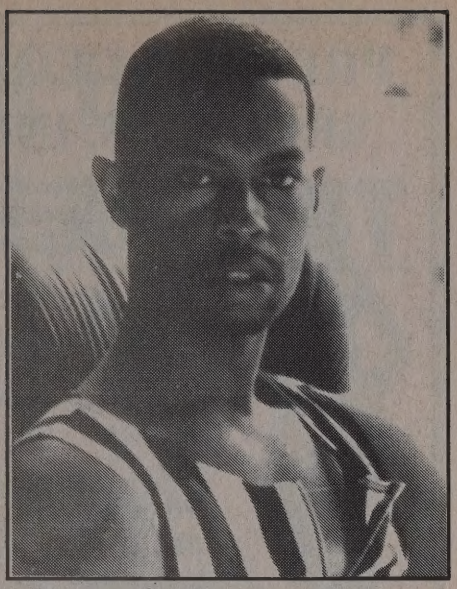

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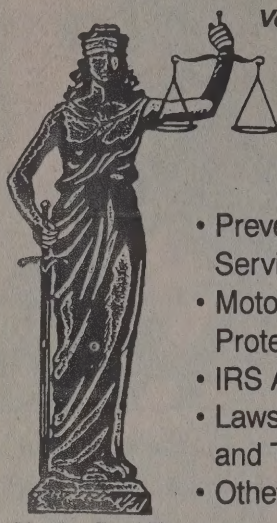

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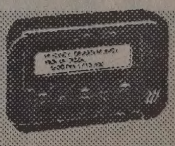

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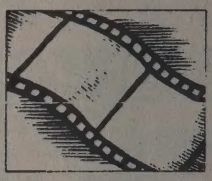

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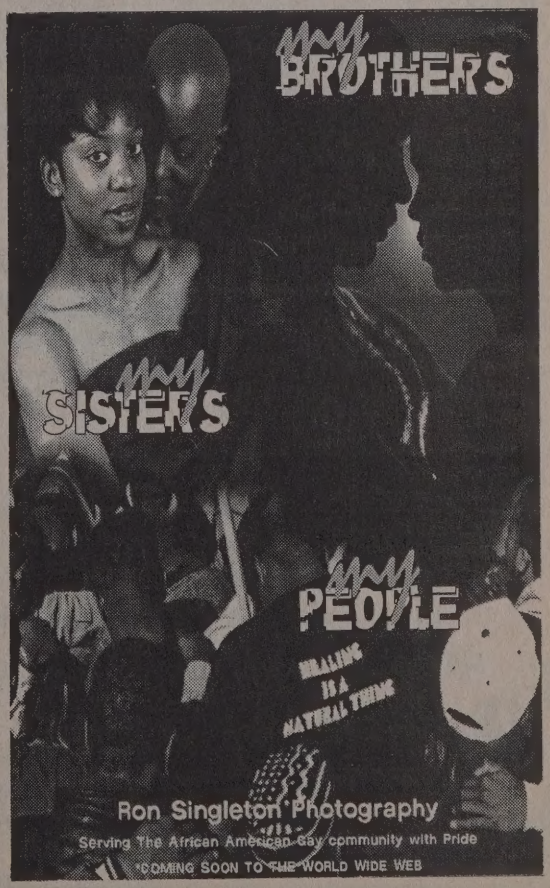


Starscopes

by Dada

Happy Birthday Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This month avoid a tendency to cling to the past. Time to move on to new horizons. Having a broad viewpoint can sometimes make you overlook minute details when evaluating a situation. Your self-sufficiency may appear as an indifference to those close to you. Let them see that beneath that shell lies a sensitive soul. Aries, Pisces, Scorpio play roles.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

Even though you enjoy the spotlight, you may find you have the need for extra solitude now. This time spent alone can help you gain a better perspective of your interpersonal relationships. Your health, or that of a family member's, may need attention.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You have a strong sense of duty when it comes to helping people, especially those you care for deeply. Be willing to give yourself the support you need to create your own happiness. Keep your goals in mind.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

The foundation of your success comes from your ability to be balanced and objective when faced with a problem. Cultivate an optimistic attitude. Use your charm to influence others as you strive towards an agreeable solution.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Although your love nature's extremely deep, you can be somewhat distrustful when it comes to emotions. This can ultimately lead to power plays. You have tremendous charisma. Guard becoming repressed secretive.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

A career opportunity may come through a relative or acquaintance. Chance for true liberation depends on discipline. Commit yourself to a fixed endeavor. Sever toxic attitudes and ties.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

A traditionalist at heart, you prefer your ideas to be tangible. Yet you can be highly idealistic, when it comes to your spiritual tendencies. You don't mind sacrificing for those you love. Be careful of being over accommodating.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

You possess an intellectual bend which leans towards the scientific. You may desire space now to study and investigate. Focus on a subject you've been interested in tackling. Avoid being aloof and disorganized.

Pisces (Feb. 19-Mar. 20)

You're a visionary with the determination to manifest your dreams. You apply abundant creativity to your group involvements. Practice sound judgement in money matters. A forgotten debt may suddenly resurface.

Aries (Mar. 21-April 19)

Your fierce independence may conflict with personal responsibilities. Show consideration for the moods of those around you. Domineering tactics can lead to loneliness. Employ generosity in all your dealings.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You crave affection, but can be conservative in expressing your private thoughts. Be open in sharing what is on your mind. Take inventory of the things that really matter. A long term relationship may require nurturing.

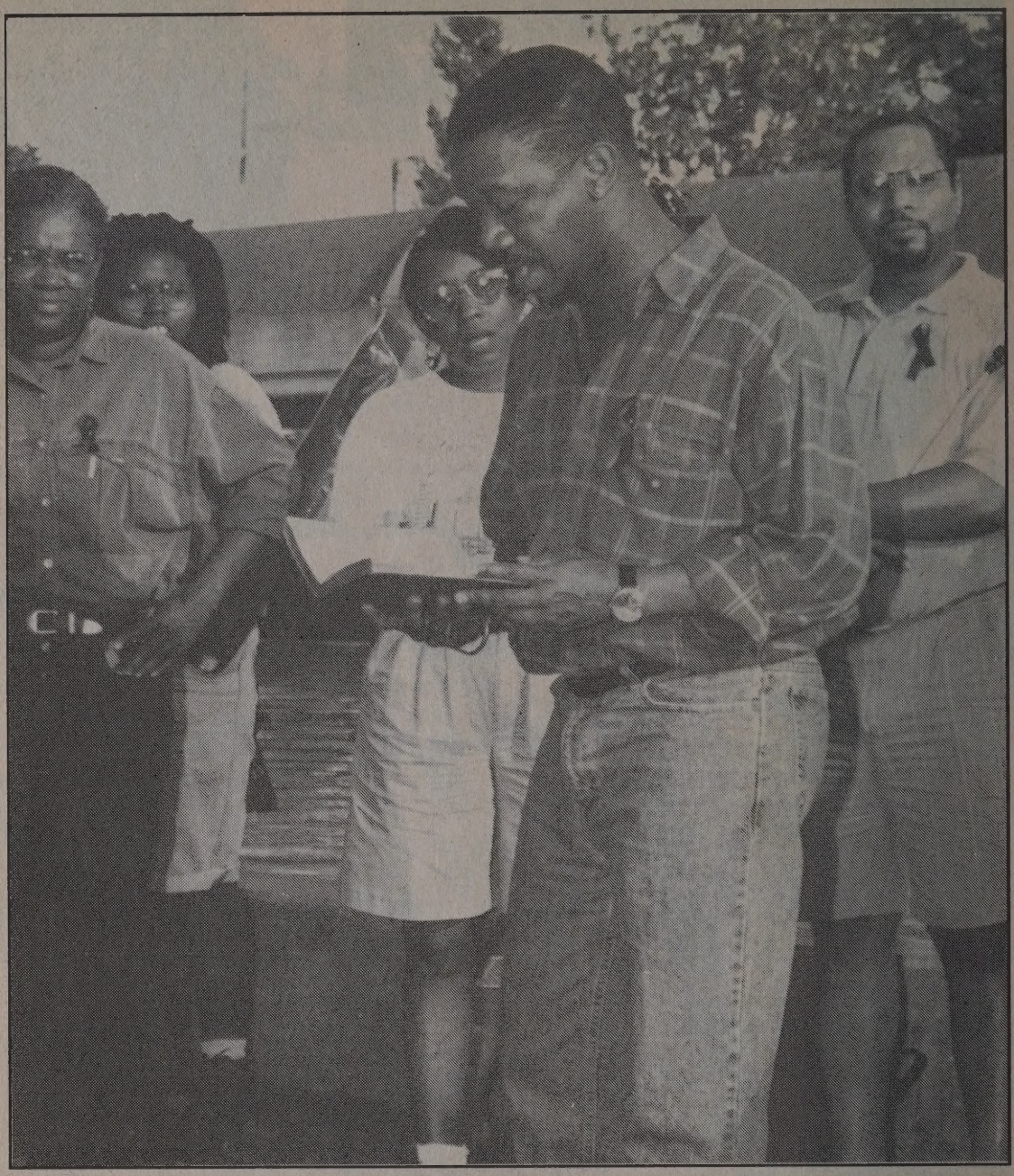
Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Stir clear of exhausting personal finances, in an attempt to relieve anxiety or merely to impress. You may need to build a security nest for those rainy days ahead. You have the daring to overcome obstacles. Try to be less demanding.

SPECIAL REPORT

Where Will These Fires Lead Us?

by Rosetta E. Ross, Ph.D.



Atlanta Activist Duncan Teague Leads a group of 50 black and white community supporters in song, at a 'Stop the Burnings' candlelight vigil last month.

As I have pondered the recent church burnings, some of which seem quite unrelated, a frequent question in my mind has been: "What is this about?" I don't mean by this question that I am wondering whether the fires are about race? Whether related or not, and no matter who is causing them, race seems clearly to be a factor. In a larger sense, though, I have wondered what might be the meaning of such violent sacrilege at this specific time of our lives.

In a recent discussion, I reflected that unresolved, suspicious burning of a church in small rural communities is and would be experienced as a form of terrorism. The fires are a kind of physical and moral assault by malevolent strangers. They bring to mind the bombings of churches during the 1960s. I am especially reminded of the 1963 bombing that killed four little girls preparing for Sunday school in Birmingham. The same moral

Antonia Randolph of Spelman College Lesbian,Bisexual Alliance.

(or immoral) forces appear to be at work. The frequency and duration of these recent church burnings evokes for me memory of the intense retaliatory fury expressed during the most violent moments of opposition to the civil rights movement.

Ferocious attacks against civil rights activity and activists signified an allegiance to the genesis and evolution of many U.S. social institutions and traditions. These institutions and traditions, embedded in a social structure which supported a race-based slave system, originated to ensure the flourishing of European Americans at the expense of African Americans.

As a matter of normal progression, the philosophy governing the origin of institutions, and the traditions developing alongside institutions, become reified, taken-for-granted aspects of ordi-

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nary living. Reified social traditions often are understood as both natural and benign features of everyday life. Because they feel natural and seem harmless, social traditions easily become embedded in the everyday world. As a consequence, persons whom the traditions benefit view them as intrinsic to a good life. Persons whose world view uncritically rests upon these traditions often feel compelled to sustain them. Consequently, those seeking to change the traditions frequently meet violent reprisals as the beneficiaries defend a way of life and view of the world.

For all of us, there is a point at which we would ask the question: "How dare anyone question or attempt to change the ordinary (understood as natural) conditions of everyday life? But such questioning and changing must occur as shut out persons around the world push for justice. At this specific time in our lives, a lot of that pushing is occurring. And the tide is turning — very slowly. Perhaps the church burnings symbolize the emotional response to this turning, a kind of counter protest and pushing back.

But this seems to be a part of a cycle. This cycle reminds me of the title of a book by Vincent Harding, "There Is a River" In this book Harding says that there has been, since the first Africans were taken as captives, a continuous stream of resistance activities opposing black oppression. There likewise has been an incessant flow of rebuttal activities seeking to suppress such resistance and to put in place or keep in place social institutions and activities which subjugate persons who are considered "different." Examples of the rebuttal activity against black resistance include hangings, beheadings, and night patrols in the wake of slave revolts; post-Reconstruction jim-crowism, black codes, and violence opposing African American political gains; and various anti©civil rights movement rhetoric and violence.

An interesting thing has happened, though, as a result of the burnings... People of different races are coming together after wards to help rebuild. Perhaps they are also coming together to say "Stop!"

At this moment in history, I believe the church burnings are a part of the rebuttal activities of the day. They are a kind of sign of these particular times. Our contemporary era — frequently referred to as "postmodernity" — is a time of diverse change. Today we attend to the experiences of many persons who, prior to postmodernity, were more excluded from full participation in public life. Universal perspectives and definitions are breaking apart. This breaking is reflected in the growing physical presence and perspectives of diversepersons.

Things are in flux. For some, this flux probably seems like chaos. For others it probably seems like a threat and an attack on a way of life. For still others the flux probably reflects progress toward a more democratic and just future. Black people are, perhaps, an easily identifiable sign of this flux and diversity. In a profusion of modes and means, African Americans are becoming more visible, vocal, and involved. And although the entrance of African Americans into wider social participation occurs through various ways, Black churches still symbolize for many the origin of this profusion. So the significance of the burning of these churches today seems to be its contemporary reflection of rebuttal activity.

An interesting thing has happened, though, as a result of the burnings. In Boligee, Alabama, in East Howellsville, North Carolina, in other places where churches were burned, and even across the country where they have not, people of different races are coming together afterwards to help rebuild. Perhaps they are also coming together to say "Stop!" The coming together reminds me of another book. This one, by Martin Luther King, Jr., is entitled "Where Do We Go from Here? Chaos or Community?"

Rosetta Ross, Ph.D., is Director of Black Church Studies at Emory University and Assistant Professor of Ethics at Interdenominatiohal Theological Seminary

ORGANIZATIONS

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BLACKLIST-Who's Who in Black Gay community
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{http://www.blk.com/blk}

BLACK STRIPE
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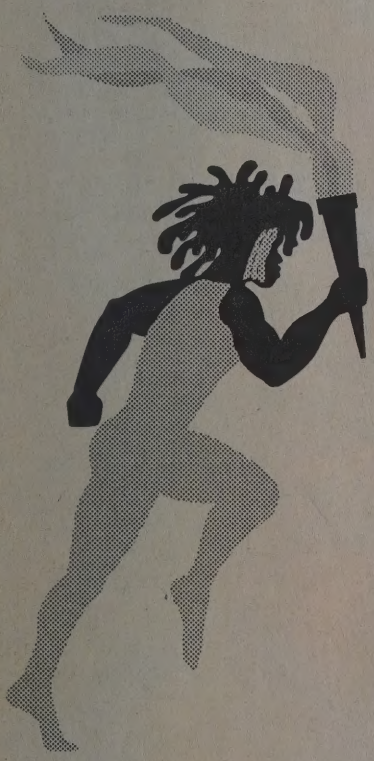

JULY 23-28

Hotter Than July — Detroit '96. Detroit's Black Gay Pride. Pride Line 313.438.0704, ext.1

Tues.: Kick-Off. St. Matthew & Joseph Church. **Wed.: Pride Poetry.** Elmwood Grill. **Thur.: Charity Body Auction.** Clinton Street Restaurant. **Fri.: Project Survival Open House.** 1150 Griswold, Ste 2000. **Creative Session.** Full Truth Unity Church **Ladies Only Ice Breaker.** Backstreet Nightclub **BBC Anniversary Kick-off Party.** Backstreet Nightclub. **Sat.: Picnic.** Palmer Park **Women Only Rap Session.** Full Truth Unity Church **BBC Anniversary Dinner.** Renaissance Center. **Sun.: Sunday School.** Full Truth Unity Church. **Community Spiritual Service** w/ Rev. S.F.Mahee, Full Truth Unity Church. **BBC Anniversary Brunch.** Renaissance Center. **Jazz Bash.** Clinton Street Restaurant

AUG.30-SEPT.1

IN THE LIFE ATLANTA. PRIDE LINE 404-872-6410. See August issue for complete schedule

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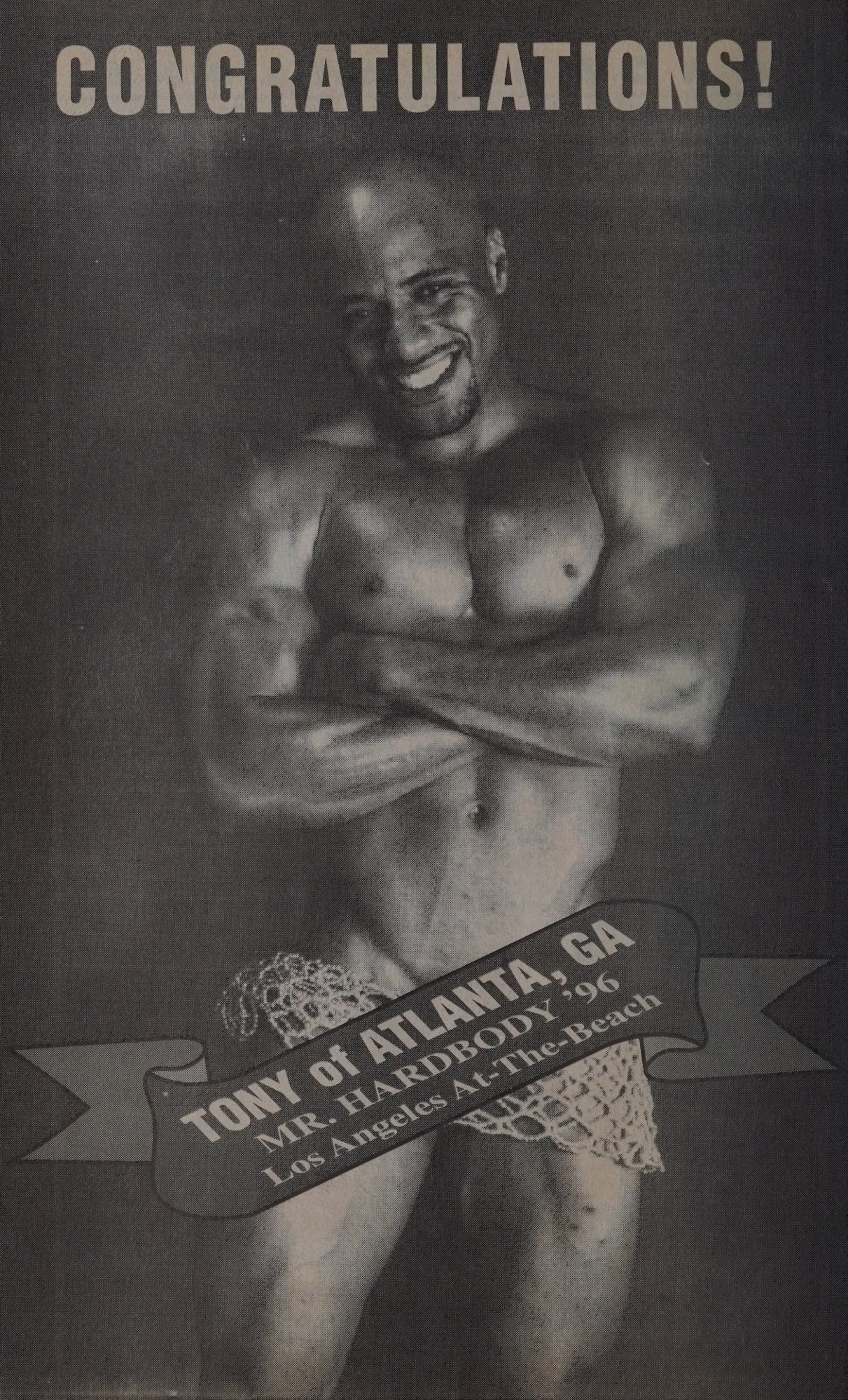
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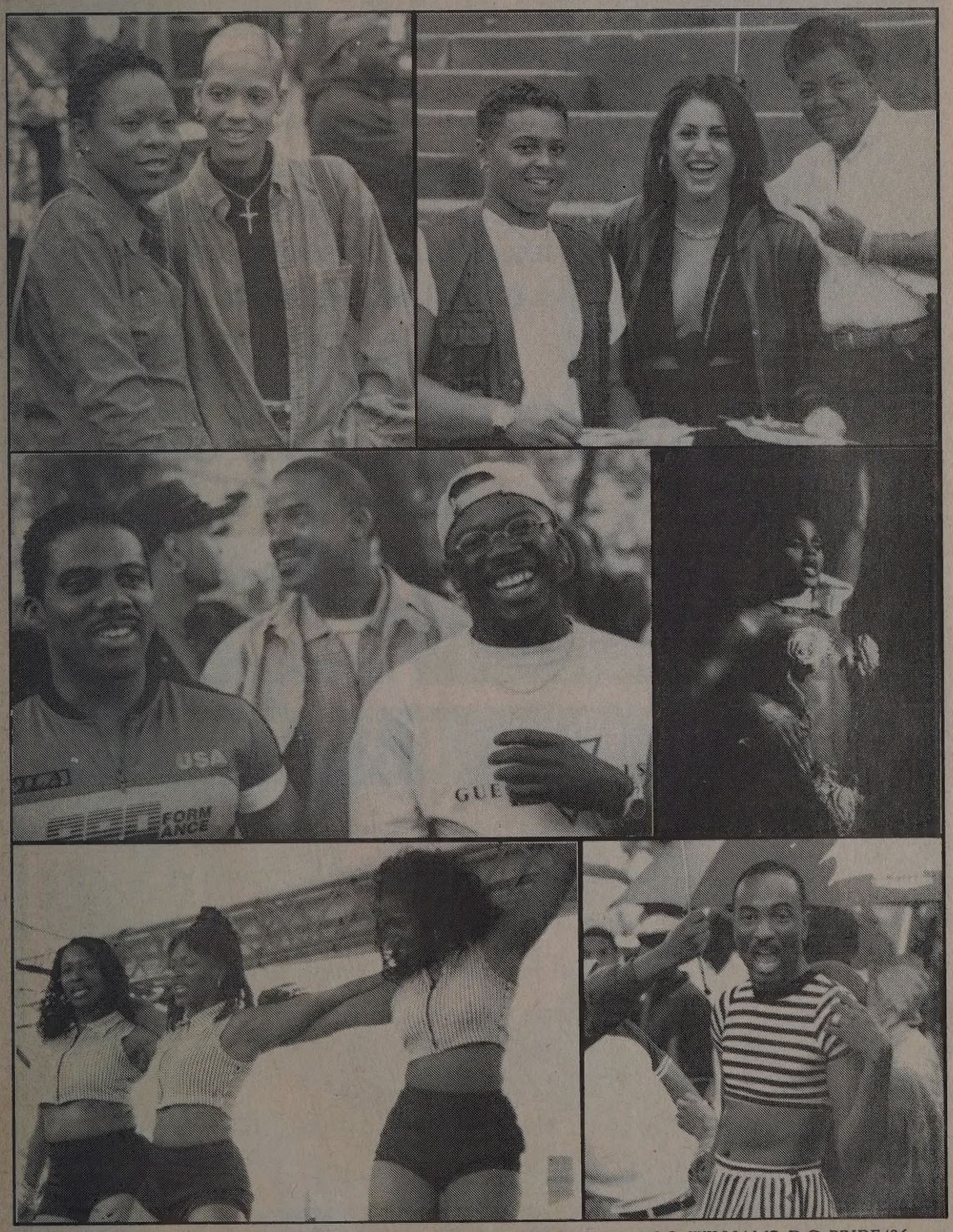

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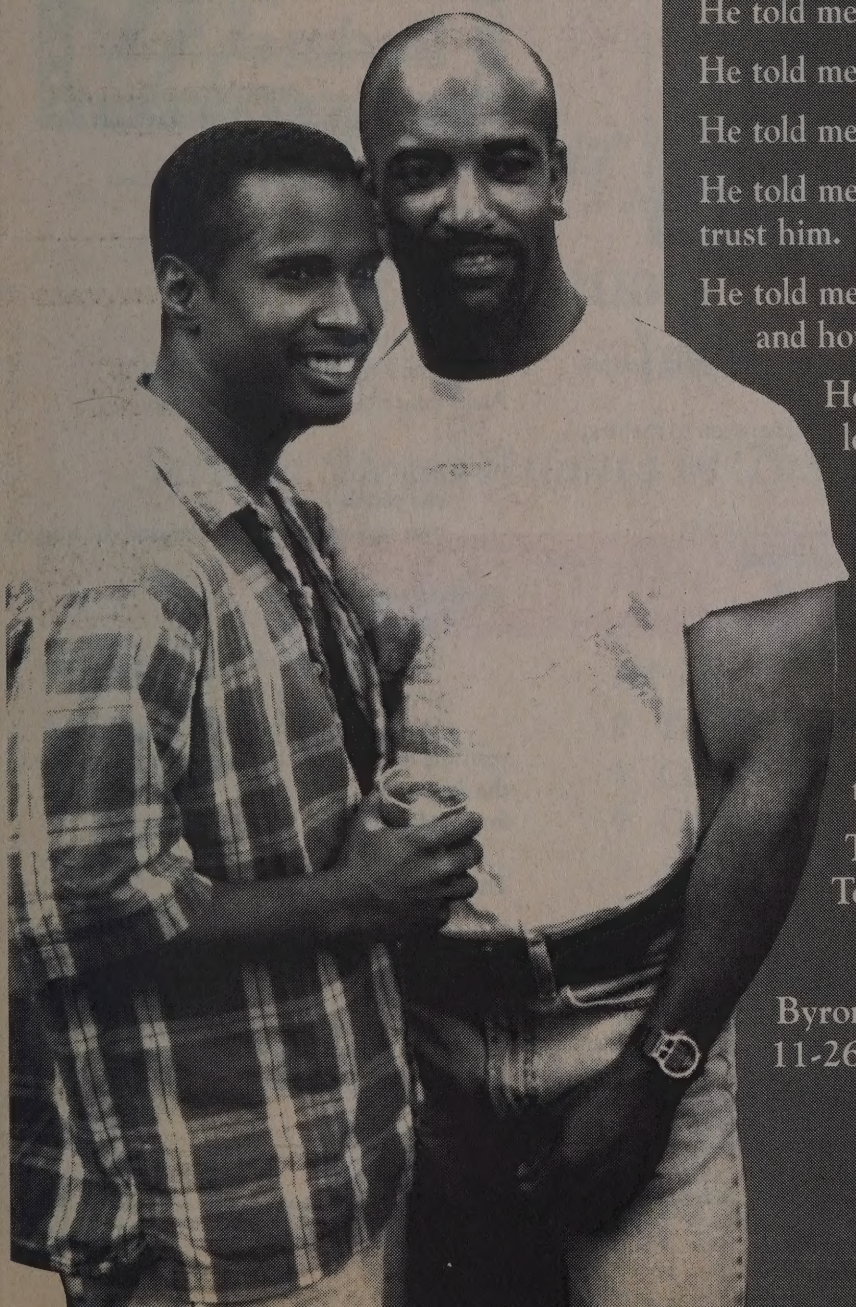
what he told me...



He told me I was Fine.

He told me he liked me.

He told me his strange middle name.

He told me his plans for the future.

He told me his past.

He told me he was horny.

He told me he was happy.

He told me he was sad.

He told me he trusts me.

He told me I should trust him.

He told me just where and how to touch him.

He told me he loved me.

But he told me that he couldn't tell me he had AIDS;

because that was too personal.

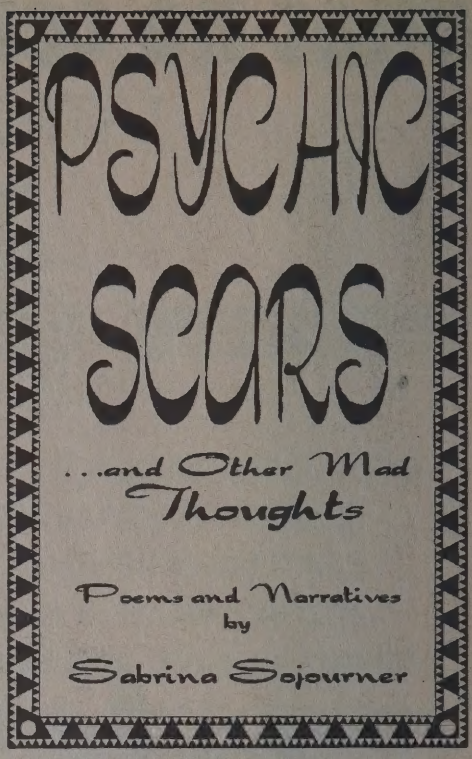
That's What He Told Me!

Byron S. Stewart
11-26-94

Psychic Scars

Title Poem of a book of Poetry

by Sabrina Sojourner



The pain of the first rip
the first tear
A faded memory fogged in by time
It's in the blood
the old folks whisper
it's in the blood
That pain's past from one generation to the next
the old folks say
The specifics appear as notes in passing
written in black on white pages
distorting the angst behind
the facts of

The pain of the first rip
the first tear
Away from the Mother
A faded memory whose knife-sharp edges shred the soul
A foggy ghost whose broiler-hot image sears the psyche

It's in the ovum
the women say
eyes welling as they gaze beyond the horizon
It's in the ovum
That's pain's past from one generation to the next
the old women say
shaking their heads
eyes moving again to the horizon
seeking to raise a chorus of despair
seeking to raise the memory of
the first rip
the first tear
Away from the Mother
Never knowing the Father
Only the searing
and not the why
Only the shredding
and not the why

It's in the sperm
the old men say
eyes welling as they gaze beyond the horizon
It's in the sperm
That's pain's past from one generation to the next
the old men say
shaking their heads
eyes moving again to the horizon
seeking to raise a chorus of despair
seeking to raise the memory of

the first rip
the first tear
Out of the arms of the Mother Land
Away from the Breath of Father Sky

It's in our soul
the people scream
eyes welling as they gaze beyond the horizon

It's in our soul
the people scream
shaking their heads
eyes spilling over into a river
millions of tears long
yearning for that which can never be recaptured
the despair still passed
from one generation to the next

The pain of the first rip
the first tear
murmuring through the chambers of the heart
a deafening whisper
AAAfffrriiiicaaaaa!
AAAfffrriiiicaaaaa!
AAAfffrriiiicaaaaa!

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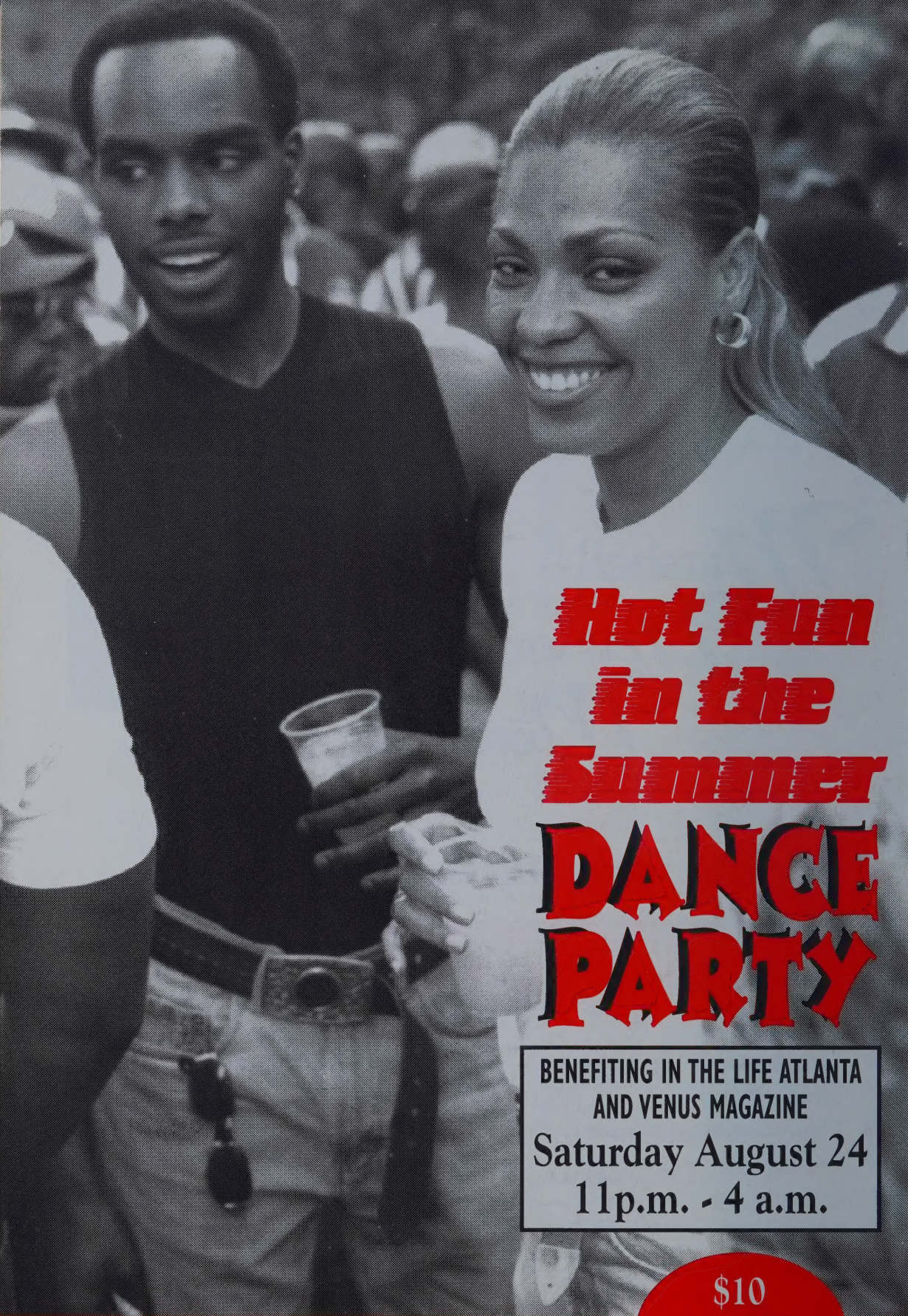

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